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Thursday, 27 March 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/716/Add.7)

The President: Before proceeding to the item on our agenda, I should like to inform members that, since the issuance of document A/68/716/Add.6, Dominica has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. That information will be reflected in document A/68/716/Add.7 to be issued at a later date.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of that information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33

Prevention of armed conflict

(b) Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution

Draft resolution (A/68/L.39)

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Andrii Deshchytsia, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.39.

Mr. Deshchytsia (Ukraine): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. It is a great honour and privilege for me to address the General Assembly. What has brought us here today is an issue of paramount importance. It is of crucial importance to my nation, of vital importance to every United Nations State Member and of even greater importance to the United Nations and the world order it embodies.

It has now been a month during which all possible and impossible boundaries of international law that had been so laboriously nourished by humankind — especially under this institution — have been ruthlessly trampled. What has happened in my country is a direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Many still struggle to grasp the reality that it happened in Ukraine, in the very heart of Europe. It happened in the twenty-first century.

Over the past month, we have witnessed the most flagrant violations of international law since the inception of the United Nations. After two weeks of military occupation, an integral part of Ukraine was forcibly annexed by a State that had previously committed itself to guaranteeing the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country in accordance with the Budapest Memorandum, by a State that happens to be one of the permanent members of the Security Council, entrusted by the membership of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

That act of aggression was meticulously calibrated to strike at a time when Ukraine was forming an inclusive Government. Now, despite all odds, such a Government is up and running. The act was aimed at — and continues to be aimed at — undermining the

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presidential elections in my country. Let me assure the General Assembly that Ukraine is determined to carry out its elections as scheduled on 25 May.

Eight rounds of urgent discussions on the Russian military intervention in Ukraine held by the Security Council clearly demonstrated how isolated Russia is on the issue. The mixture of false justifications, half-truths, deliberate distortions, insults and naked lies offered by the Russian side have failed to impress the Council.

Just a few days ago, at the opening session of the third Nuclear Security Summit, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the need to build a culture of nuclear security. He rightly emphasized that the time had come to strengthen the rule of law in both disarmament and non-proliferation. Speaking about efforts by the United Nations to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, the Secretary-General pointed out that the assurances provided to non-nuclear-weapon States by nuclear-weapon States must be honoured:

> "In the case of Ukraine, security assurances were an essential condition for its accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, the credibility of the assurances given to Ukraine in the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 has been seriously undermined by recent events. The implications are profound, both for regional security and the integrity of the nuclear non-proliferation regime."

We cannot agree more. Two years ago, when we proposed to the Russian side to sign a bilateral agreement on security and confidence-building measures, it refused, saying that the idea of an attack on Ukraine was absurd. Six months ago, we were preparing to have a trilateral meeting in The Hague among the leaders of Ukraine, the United States of America and Russia to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Ukraine's nuclear-free success story. Yet that plan was crushed almost overnight by the Russian aggression against Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea.

> "We have consistently called for the recognition of a polycentric world order, equal and indivisible security in full conformity with the United Nations Charter's basic principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity of any State, inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs ... A just and democratic world order cannot be achieved without a strict observance of the principles of the supremacy of international law, mainly of the United Nations Charter".

Mr. President, you may think that the foregoing are my words. They are not. They are in fact an excerpt from the statement of position of the Russian Federation before the opening of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

> "Recently a common argument has been increasingly made to the effect that the threat or use of force, directly prohibited by the Charter of the United Nations, is virtually the most effective method of addressing international problems, including the settlement of domestic conflicts ... despite the fact that recent experience with such interventions has proved that they are ineffective, meaningless and destructive. That is an extremely dangerous path leading to the erosion of the foundations of today's world order and the subversion of the weapons of mass destruction non-proliferation regimes." (*A/68/PV.15, p. 34*)

That paragraph is also not Ukraine's, although we fully agree with its thrust. It is taken from a statement made by my colleague, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, at the general debate last September. There are volumes of such statements made by representatives of the Russian Federation at the United Nations.

"Practice what you preach", one might think. We in Ukraine do. As does the African Union, whose Constitutive Act, of 2001, calls in Article 4 for, inter alia, sovereign equality and interdependence among Member States of the Union, respect for borders and the prohibition of the use of force or threat to use force among Member States of the Union, and non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another.

As does the Organization of American States, whose Charter clearly states that no territorial acquisitions or special advantages obtained either by force or by other means of coercion shall be recognized.

As does the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with its Charter renouncing aggression or other actions in any manner inconsistent with international law.

As does the European Union.

As does the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with its 1975 Helsinki Final Act.

The list goes on and on.

Despite all the wrongs that have been inflicted on my country over the past month, draft resolution A/68/L.39, before the Assembly today, was drafted with the sole and strict goal of upholding the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The purpose of the draft resolution is to reinforce core United Nations principles at a moment when they are experiencing a major challenge. The text addresses respect for territorial integrity and the non-use of force to settle disputes. It does not break any new legal or normative ground. Yet it sends a crucial message that the international community will not allow what has happened in Crimea to set a precedent for further challenges to our rules-based international framework. It clearly serves a de-escalatory purpose and explicitly welcomes international efforts, including those by the Secretary-General, in support of a peaceful settlement of the situation with respect to Ukraine.

I am convinced that a strong vote today will help deter further aggressive moves. I sincerely thank all sponsors of the draft resolution, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", and look forward to its adoption by the General Assembly.

One month has cost us dearly. More inaction may cost us the Organization itself. By voting in favour of the draft resolution, the General Assembly will vote in favour of the United Nations Charter; a vote against it or abstention in the voting is tantamount to undermining the Charter.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On 21 March an event occurred that is of truly historic significance. Following the referendum in the Crimea, during which the overwhelming majority of the Crimean population voted in favour of being with Russia, there was a reunification of Crimea and the Russian Federation. We call on everyone to respect that voluntary choice, just as Russia has done.

Russia could not refuse the Crimeans' wish to support their right to self-determination in fulfilling their long-standing aspirations. Historical justice has been vindicated. Crimea was an integral part of our country for several centuries. It shares with our country a common history, culture and, most important, a common people. Only when an arbitrary decision by the leadership of the former Soviet Union in 1954 to transfer the Crimean Sevastopol to the Ukrainian republic in the framework of a single State was that natural state of affairs upset. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, it became clear that Crimea was cut off from Russia. In 1992, the people of Crimea adopted a Constitution that established that Crimea would be an independent State within Ukraine. However, soon after that, the Constitution was changed by Kyiv without consulting the people of Crimea, and the status of the peninsula was reduced to an autonomous republic as part of a unitary Ukrainian State.

The Crimeans never accepted that state of affairs. They openly demonstrated their sympathy for Russia. Their patience snapped against the background of a deep political crisis that occurred in Ukraine. The crisis was to a large extent provoked by the adventurous actions of the current political forces, which sought to break the centuries-old ties of Russia and Ukraine, by giving Kyiv a false choice between either the European Union and the West or Russia. That policy was carried out with unprecedented bluntness. They could either sign a Ukraine-European Union association agreement, as demanded of the Ukrainian Government, or they could face sanctions. Within the ranks of anti-Government demonstrators were representatives of the European Union and the United States, who openly marched alongside them and called on them to openly carry out anti-Government actions.

The central square of the city — Maidan Nezalezhnosti — was turned into a militarized camp. Well-trained and equipped units of militants carried out violent attacks against law enforcement bodies and seized administrative buildings. In one of those buildings, the trade unions building, the so-called common diversion of the Maidan was organized. On the seventh floor of that building was a permanent staff member of the United States Embassy. By the way, it is from that building that snipers were shooting at police and demonstrators; that action was clearly aimed at provoking a violent overthrow of the Government.

At some point, it appeared that it would be possible to stop before the situation became worse. On 21 February, President Yanukovych and the leaders of the main opposition party signed an agreement, which provided for disarming the militants, freeing the administrative building that had been seized, establishing a Government of national unity, launching a constitutional process and holding presidential elections by the end of the year. However, someone thought that such a scenario was not sufficiently radical. The violence continued. Under the threat of physical

violence, President Yanukovych had to leave Kyiv and then Ukraine.

The legitimate Government stopped operating in Kyiv. Violence became the rule of politics. In the Verkhovna Rada, the parties that supported the Yanukovych majority became victims of that violence. As a result, the Rada was reshuffled and, instead of a Government of national unity, a so-called Government of victors emerged. The shots were called by those who conducted an armed coup, national radicals who — according to the definition of the European Parliament — preached racist, anti-semitic and xenophobic views and seemed to hate everything that was Russian and did not conceal that they considered the Ukrainian allies of nazis as their ideological ancestors. Nearly the first decision of the new Government was to revoke the official status of the Russian language, which the Crimeans and the inhabitants of eastern and southern Ukraine use. In those regions, Kyiv began appointing Governors who were rejected by the local people. Threats were addressed to Crimea to send so-called friendship trains there — groups of militants that would continue the kind of violence being carried out in Kyiv and in the western and central regions of Ukraine. All that created a kind of critical mass that led the Crimeans to take a decision on self-determination and reunification with Russia. I think that one has to be very misanthropic to criticize them for that.

In the light of all the reasons I just referred to, Russia is against the draft resolution A/68/L.39. It is confrontational in nature and seeks to put into question the meaning of the referendum that took place in Crimea, which has already played a key historical role. It would be counterproductive to challenge it.

At the same time, we think that the draft resolution contains some important and correct statements; for example, the call to refrain from unilateral actions or inflammatory rhetoric, which could lead to increased tensions. We think that, in order to heed that appeal, it is not necessary to adopt any resolutions. It is simply important to base our position on the interests of the Ukrainian people — the interests of normal international relations. We hope that kind of understanding will prevail in the course of today's discussion and in the course of the dialogue on Ukraine.

Russia has taken part in this dialogue in a most constructive fashion. Our advice is simple — it is important to implement the main provisions of the agreement of 21 February. Ukraine requires a true constitutional process with the participation of all civilized political forces in all regions that could lead to the kind of conditions where people do not have to fear for their lives and their safety and that would ensure that their fundamental rights can be exercised.

The President: I now give the floor to the Head of the Delegation of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting of the General Assembly. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. Montenegro, Albania, Norway and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

After the horrors of the Second World War, the international community agreed on a new system of international relations based on the Charter of the United Nations. That system was designed to protect the peace and security of all countries around the world. It is our collective responsibility to safeguard it.

The European Union supports draft resolution A/68/L.39, on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and all 28 States members of the European Union are sponsors. The draft resolution reconfirms the importance of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, notably the obligation of all States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and to settle their disputes by peaceful means in full respect of international law.

Significantly, the draft resolution also affirms the General Assembly's commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Those principles are also prominently included in the political provisions of the Association Agreement signed on Friday, 21 March, between Ukraine and the European Union.

The European Union remains committed to upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The European Union does not recognize the illegal referendum in Crimea, which is in clear violation of the Ukrainian Constitution. It strongly condemns the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and will not recognize it.

The European Union firmly believes that there is no place in the twenty-first century for the use of

force and coercion to change borders in Europe or elsewhere. The European Union strongly condemns the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces. The Russian actions are not only in breach of the Charter of the United Nations, they are also in clear breach of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and its subsequent processes and instruments within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which over the past 40 years have contributed to overcoming divisions in Europe and building a peaceful and united continent. Those actions also violate specific commitments to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and the bilateral Treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership of 1997.

The European Union urges Russia to take steps to de-escalate the crisis, immediately withdraw its forces back to their pre-crisis numbers and garrisons in line with its international commitments and avail itself of all the relevant international mechanisms to find a peaceful and negotiated solution, in full respect of its bilateral and multilateral commitments to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The European Union welcomes the meeting of Russia's Foreign Minister with his Ukrainian counterpart in The Hague this Monday, but deplores that Russia has still not taken steps to de-escalate the crisis and that direct talks between Ukraine and the Russian Federation have still not started. We call on both Ukraine and Russia to start a meaningful dialogue as soon as possible and without preconditions.

The European Union fully supports multilateral initiatives aimed at fostering peace, stability and security, and respect for human rights in Ukraine. We commend the visit of the Secretary-General to Moscow and Kyiv last week.

The European Union welcomes the agreement reached on 21 March on the deployment of an OSCE special monitoring mission to Ukraine to monitor and support the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments. The European Union is fully committed to the monitoring mission's success and calls for its early deployment throughout Ukraine.

We also applaud the deployment of a United Nations human rights monitoring mission to Ukraine. We welcome the fact that Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović was finally given access to Crimea. We call on the United Nations mission to be given such access as well. We strongly share the view of Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović that there is an urgent need to assess and report on human rights violations and on the implications of recent events and to monitor the current situation throughout the country so as to help investigations, prevent further violations and verify the truth with regard to the human rights situation. We also welcome the valuable contribution of the Council of Europe.

We commend the measured response shown thus far by Ukraine. We welcome the Ukrainian Government's commitment to ensuring the representative nature and inclusiveness of governmental structures reflecting regional diversity, to ensuring the full protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, to undertaking constitutional reform, to investigating all human rights violations and acts of violence and to fighting extremism. In that context, the European Union encourages the Government of Ukraine to ensure that the presidential elections to be held on 25 May are free and fair.

The European Union is ready to stand by Ukraine and committed to providing strong financial support to its economic and financial stabilization. We encourage other Member States and international organizations, including financial institutions, to assist in restoring the stability of Ukraine and supporting structural reforms.

The European Union supports the Ukrainian people and their right to choose their own future. Our common goal is to restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and uphold its independence. The European Union stands ready to facilitate and engage in a meaningful dialogue involving Ukraine and Russia, including through the establishment of a multilateral mechanism. The European Union will remain at the forefront of efforts to find a political solution in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Power (United States of America): We meet today to express our collective judgement on the legality of the Russian Federation's military intervention in, and occupation of, Ukraine's Crimea region.

The draft resolution before us (A/68/L.39) is about one issue and one issue only — affirming our commitment to the sovereignty, political independence,

unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Through it, we make clear our ongoing support for the fundamental idea that borders are not mere suggestions. At the same time, this draft resolution expresses the desire of the international community to see a peaceful outcome to the dispute between Ukraine and Russia and stresses the importance of maintaining an inclusive political dialogue that reflects every segment of Ukrainian society.

We have always said that Russia had legitimate interests in Ukraine. It has been disheartening in the extreme to see Russia carry on as if Ukrainians have no legitimate interests in Crimea, when Crimea is a part of Ukraine. Self-determination is a value that all of us here today hail. We do so while recognizing the critical, foundational importance of national and international law. Coercion cannot be the means by which to achieve self-determination. The chaos that would ensue is not a world that any of us can afford — it is a dangerous world. We echo the views expressed by all regions of the world these past weeks calling for a de-escalation of tensions and an electoral process in Ukraine that will allow the people of that country, in all of their diversity, to choose their leaders, freely, fairly and without coercion.

Speaking at The Hague two days ago, President Obama said,

> "If the Ukrainian people are allowed to make their own decisions, their decision will be that they want to have a relationship with Europe and they want to have a relationship with Russia, and that this is not a zero-sum game".

Ukraine was wise to bring its concerns before the General Assembly. It is wise to seek our backing for the preservation of its rights, which are also the rights of all of us to have our territory and independence respected. Ukraine is justified in seeking our votes in reaffirming and protecting its borders. It is justified in asking us not to recognize the new status quo that the Russian Federation has tried to create with its military. Ukraine merits our commendations for the restraint it has shown and the positive steps it has taken to prevent a further escalation of the crisis and deserves our full support in trying to persuade Russia to end its isolation and to move from a policy of unilateral confrontation and aggressive acts to a good faith diplomatic effort informed by facts, facilitated by dialogue and based on law.

We urge members to vote in favour of a draft resolution that enshrines the centrality of territorial integrity and calls for a diplomatic — not a military — solution to the crisis.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this plenary meeting. The situation in Ukraine is serious, and the international community must reaffirm its strong resolve to urgently find a peaceful solution to the crisis. It is appropriate that we discuss it under an agenda item that highlights the importance of prevention and diplomacy, namely, "Prevention of armed conflict: Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution".

Brazil has been following the escalation of tensions in Ukraine attentively. Our concern reflects our close bilateral ties with Ukraine, which in 2009 were elevated to the level of a strategic partnership. Together Brazil and Ukraine are developing high-technology projects, including in the field of space technology. Brazil is also proud to be host to one of the largest communities of people of Ukrainian descent outside Europe. Brazil has stated its concern about the gravity of the situation since the very early stages of the crisis. We expressed deep regret over the deaths in Kyiv and urged all parties to conduct dialogue, underscoring that the political crisis should be addressed peacefully and on the basis of respect for institutions and human rights.

Brazil has consistently upheld that the Charter of the United Nations must be respected under all circumstances. That position reflects our unflinching defence of an international system based on cooperative multilateralism and respect for international law. In that regard, Brazil supports all efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis and urges the Russian Federation and Ukraine to engage in constructive talks aimed at resolving their differences. We commend the Secretary-General's initiatives to de-escalate tensions, restore calm and promote dialogue. We encourage him to continue working on a diplomatic solution to the crisis. Brazil invites the parties to engage in an inclusive political dialogue that takes into account the diversity of the Ukrainian people and respects the rights of all Ukrainians, including all minorities.

In this situation, it is of the utmost importance that all stakeholders exercise maximum restraint.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 22 February, President Raúl Castro Ruíz said that

the intervention of Western Powers must stop in order to enable the Ukrainian people to exercise their right to self-determination in a legitimate way, and that we should not ignore the fact that such acts could have very serious consequencse for international peace and security.

As Cuba's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, pointed out at a press conference in Havana on 6 March, subsequent events have demonstrated the gravity and validity of that statement, and that we cannot accept the violent overthrow of a constitutional Government at the cost of dozens of dead and wounded as a result of an intervention by the United States and some of its NATO allies, threats to citizens' integrity based on their national origin and the destruction of legitimate and legally recognized institutions and entities. He added that those threatening the Russian Federation with sanctions and reprisals were the Governments that brought about regime change in Ukraine, and, prior to that, started wars of conquest, interfered or intervened directly in the internal affairs of various States around the world that disagreed with their goals of domination and defended their own sovereignty and independence.

While earnestly opposed to the imposition of sanctions on the Russian Federation, Cuba condemns hypocrisy, double standards and the aggression manifest in the actions and pronouncements of NATO concerning the matter. The Cuban Foreign Minister warned that history would demand that the United States and its allies take responsibility for an increasingly offensive military doctrine outside the borders of the North Atlantic alliance, which threatens the sovereignty and independence of every State and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The attempt to extend NATO up to the borders of the Russian Federation is a serious threat to international peace, security and stability.

In his statement of 22 February, President Castro noted that numerous analogies could be found in United States unconventional warfare manuals that have been applied in various countries of our region and, with related refinements, on other continents, as the cases of Syria and Ukraine testify. He invited those who had doubts on the matter to look at United States Army Training Circular, TC 18-01, published on 30 November 2010 and entitled *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*. Can the United States and NATO provide assurances that the use of force and the concepts of war envisaged in that document are not applicable to, nor can be applied against other countries, including some in Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States proclaimed a zone of peace?

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that Ukraine and Cuba are united by deep, historic, unbreakable ties. We will always remember Ukrainians' contribution to our development. In a modest way, we have tried to live up to our duty of solidarity, particularly with the children affected by the Chernobyl accident. No one has done more or with greater care for those children than the people of Cuba.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): The recent events and the current situation in Ukraine are a major challenge to the rule of law. All members of the Organization are bound by the obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any State. The annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol is therefore a very serious violation of international law and of grave concern to the Government of Liechtenstein. We consider that action null and void and will not recognize it or its consequences. The annexation was preceded by an illegitimate declaration of independence based on a referendum held in violation of the Constitution of Ukraine and of basic tenets of international law, including paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. The events also starkly illustrate the continued relevance of an internationally agreed definition of aggression. Such a definition was agreed on by consensus at the 2010 Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in Kampala. We hope that States will continue to expeditiously ratify the amendments to the Rome Statute on the crime of aggression.

The Charter commits us to both the principle of territorial integrity and the right of all peoples to self-determination. The two are designed to be compatible, and the relationship between them was further elaborated in subsequent texts. In adopting the Declaration on Friendly Relations in 1970, the Assembly struck a careful balance between the right of self-determination and the principle of territorial integrity. Some 20 years ago, Liechtenstein presented an initiative to help operationalize the right to self-determination through various degrees of self-administration. The initiative was aimed at encouraging States to provide appropriate levels of self-administration to entities within their borders,

based on consultation and negotiation, with third-party assistance when necessary. Those ideas were designed to prevent dissatisfaction on the part of communities within States that could lead to claims of independence, without at the same time excluding independence as an option. Under that model, the various stages of self-administration, as well as the independence option, become the result of an agreement between the parties concerned. We are fully committed to the right of self-determination, exercised in conformity with international law. It is that very commitment that leads to the conclusion that the draft resolution before us is a balanced and faithful reflection of current international law. We therefore support it without any reservation.

The failed adoption of the draft resolution in the Security Council earlier this month raises important governance questions for the Organization. There has been a worrisome increase in the use of the veto and the threat thereof in the recent past, sometimes in a manner that prevented the United Nations from fulfilling its core functions. But the vote in the Council on 15 March (see S/PV.7138) gave rise to an additional concern that requires further consideration.

According to paragraph 3 of Article 27 of the Charter of the United Nations, Council members that are parties to a dispute shall abstain from voting on decisions under Chapter VI of the Charter. It seems to us that this provision should have been applied — a perception that has been only strengthened by the events since. It is important that the question finds the attention of the wider membership, together with other urgent issues concerning the use of the veto.

We support all efforts that will help prevent a further escalation of the situation in Ukraine, which remains volatile. We welcome the commitment of the Secretary-General and the efforts undertaken by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe under the chairmanship of Switzerland. We applaud in particular the agreement to deploy a special monitoring mission, and are confident that those international and regional efforts can greatly contribute to de-escalating the situation on the ground.

Before the events discussed in today's draft resolution and thereafter, the situation in Ukraine has been fuelled by a serious human rights crisis and at least partial breakdown of the rule of law. The strong and early engagement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has therefore been crucial, and we support the deployment of a mission by her Office throughout Ukraine. We believe that a return to the rule of law and effective protection of the rights of all persons belonging to minorities in the country are indispensable prerequisites for an inclusive political dialogue.

Mr. Ulibarri (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution before the General Assembly (A/68/L.39) is of universal importance, yet its relevance is even greater to States that, due to their small size and limited resources, depend solely upon the legitimacy of international law to protect their sovereignty, defend their integrity, strengthen security and preserve peace.

The draft resolution arises from a severe bilateral crisis of disturbing global implications. But its text is broader than a specific geographic location and focuses on reaffirming the principles and standards of conduct that are crucial for stability, peace and international coexistence. Among those principles and standards must be noted respect for the territorial integrity of States, fulfillment of formal commitments among States, including rejection of the use of force in settling disputes, and full and genuine exercise of self-determination without falsehood or condition. For all of those reasons, it is also a draft resolution on respect for the Charter of the United Nations.

The Charter of the United Nations clearly defines rights and obligations in regard to which compliance is not optional. All Members of the Organization must respect them. But perhaps an even greater obligation weighs on the five States that, under Articles 23 and 27 of the Charter, possess special powers and responsibilities regarding the Organization, and hence to its other Members and the international community.

Costa Rica has no such power or competency, or any means to defend itself against external aggression. Our weapon is international law. We view the draft resolution as a way to reaffirm and defend the law. Staying silent now, in the light of the very serious implications, risks leading to further, perhaps worse, future violations.

The illegitimate violation by force of Ukraine's territorial integrity is clear. Also clear is the fact that one of the three States that pledged in 1994 to respect Ukraine's borders in exchange for Ukraine's renunciation of nuclear weapons has failed to uphold its commitment, with serious implications for nuclear non-proliferation. That is a source of concern for the

entire international community, but in particular for countries such as those of Latin America and the Caribbean that have declared themselves nuclear-weapon-free.

Similarly, we are concerned that in the light of real or perceived disputes, the first line of action has been the deployment of military force rather than the launching of dialogue. Neither conduct is acceptable. All lead to disturbing precedents and, added to other elements, in terms of the voting of 16 March in Crimea, more than opposing Ukraine's Constitution, such action has violated the legitimate exercise of the right to self-determination.

To be genuine, self-determination must be preceded by open debate based on clear rules accepted by all parties, impartial authorities and the presenting of real options to the people. Furthermore, self-determination must be exercised without exclusion, influence or intimidation. Unfortunately, those elements were absent in this case.

The fait accompli could impose a reality on the ground, but it will not establish rights. We hope that, with the Assembly's adoption, the draft resolution will be able to rectify the violations that have occurred and prevent worse ones from taking place, and thus ensure a more respectful, stable and peaceful future coexistence with respect for the rule of law.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada): Russia's military intervention in Ukraine is a grave threat to international peace and security. Canada joins our partners and allies in condemning in the strongest terms this unilateral and unjustified assault on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Under Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, all States are obliged to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any other State. Article 2 also reaffirms States' obligations to settle international disputes through peaceful means. Any attempt at disrupting the national unity or territorial integrity of a State is incompatible with the fundamental purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

(*spoke in French*)

Through its unilateral actions in invading and seeking to annex Crimea, Russia has blatantly violated those core principles. Crimea's so-called referendum was not authorized by Ukraine. It was conducted while Crimea was under Russia's illegal military occupation. The referendum is therefore illegitimate and null and void. We do not and will not recognize its outcome.

(*spoke in English*)

As a result of Russia's refusal to de-escalate, Canada has been forced, along with our Group of Seven partners and other allies, to take action. We have recalled our ambassador from Moscow for consultations. We have limited our engagement with Russia and suspended military-to-military contacts. We have frozen the assets of former Ukrainian officials, including former President Yanukovych. Last week, we imposed financial sanctions and entry bans on Russian and Crimean officials who bear responsibility for the crisis in Crimea and for threatening Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It is not too late for Russia to choose an alternate path. Canada fully supports efforts in the deployment of a comprehensive special monitoring mission by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We welcome Russia's support for the mission. However, the mission needs to be given access to all of Ukraine, including Crimea. Canada also supports the United Nations decision to send monitors to investigate reports of human rights violations across Ukraine, no matter the alleged perpetrators. That mission, too, must be allowed into Crimea.

We believe that Ukraine has the right to choose its own future, free of coercion and the threat of violence by outside Powers. As a result of Russia's aggression in Crimea, and its refusal to de-escalate, Canada strongly supports draft resolution A/68/L.39 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The draft resolution reaffirms the international community's commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

(*spoke in French*)

The draft resolution also stresses the importance of protecting the rights of all persons in Ukraine, including the rights of Crimean Tatars and other minorities. Finally, it calls upon all States, international organizations and agencies to oppose any alteration to the status of Crimea or the city of Sevastopol on the basis of the referendum of 16 March, which is illegitimate and has no validity.

(*spoke in English*)

The international community cannot return to the days of the 1930s, when stronger Powers carved up weaker nations. Relations between States must be governed by the rule of law, not the law of the jungle.

Canada calls on the Russian Federation to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to conform to international law, to avoid any further loss of life and to fully reverse its occupation of Crimea. We therefore urge all Member States to support the draft resolution.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I thank you, Mr. President, for holding this important debate today on the situation in Ukraine.

Japan fully agrees with the draft resolution entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine" (A/68/L.39), and therefore decided to sponsor it. With your permission, Sir, I would like to state some key points regarding Japan's position on this matter.

The Russian Federation's recognition of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea's independence, along with its illegal attempt to annex Crimea, represents an infringement of the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It is a clear violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Whether the international community looks at what is happening in Ukraine as a bystander or chooses to stand up and take appropriate action could have a grave impact on what the international community will look like in 10 or 20 years. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently said, we are at an important crossroads.

This is not a problem for Ukraine or Europe alone. Any attempt to change the status quo with the threat of force in the background is a serious challenge to the entire international community. No country in the world should overlook an attempt by another State to alter the status quo by such means.

Paragraph 3 of the draft resolution urges all parties to pursue immediately the peaceful resolution of the situation. In that regard, the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Russian Federation on 24 March is an important step. Continued and serious dialogue between both parties is of crucial importance.

As stated in the draft resolution, we welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other international and regional organizations to support a de-escalation of the situation with respect to Ukraine. Japan is ready to support such initiatives and has decided to contribute €100,000 to the activities of the OSCE in the field of the promotion of political dialogue in Ukraine.

At the same time, in order to ensure the economic stability of Ukraine, which is now facing severe financial conditions, strong support by the international community is indispensable. In this spirit, Japan has decided to make a financial contribution of up to $1.5 billion for the stability and prosperity of Ukraine.

I would like to conclude by saying that Japan will vote in favour of the draft resolution. I further reaffirm Japan's commitment to the pursuit of a peaceful solution to the situation in Ukraine, working in close cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations. Japan will remain seized of this matter and continue to play an active role.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has been paying heightened attention to the developments in the situation in Ukraine. Recently, the spillover effects of the Ukraine crisis have become very obvious. The current stance of confrontation between the parties is something that China does not want to see at all.

The question of Ukraine involves the interests and concerns of various parties, so there should be a balanced approach to addressing the question. All parties should exercise restraint, refrain from exacerbating the situation and continue their efforts to iron out their differences through political and diplomatic means to solve the question of Ukraine within the framework of law and order.

China has been calling on the international community to make constructive efforts, including through good offices, to ease the situation in Ukraine. We believe that the actions the United Nations has taken on the question of Ukraine should reflect consensus by all parties and should be conducive to the relaxation of tensions and to achieving a political settlement of the crisis. China supports the mediation efforts by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We have also taken note of the host of proposals put forward by the parties concerned on solving the question of Ukraine.

In the context of ongoing diplomatic mediation efforts by the parties concerned, an attempt to push

ahead with a vote on draft resolution A/68/L.39, on the question of Ukraine, will only further complicate the situation.

China has always been opposed to intervention in the internal affairs of other countries and has always respected the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. China has adopted a consistent, balanced and impartial approach to the question of Ukraine. China has proposed an initiative comprising three principled points for the political settlement of the crisis in Ukraine. China calls for the early establishment and implementation of an international coordination mechanism, with the participation of all parties concerned, in order to explore and consider the ideas, concepts and proposals for a political settlement. The most pressing matter now is to identify those ideas, concepts and proposals so as to prevent further escalation of tension.

China will continue to do its utmost to promote the maintenance of peace and dialogue and to play a more constructive role in achieving a political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): Turkey attaches importance to the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and political unity of Ukraine. The results of the illegal referendum held in Crimea on 16 March, in violation of the Ukrainian Constitution and international agreements, do not bear legal validity. Turkey does not recognize the developmente facto situation. We believe that establishing faits accomplis through military means is extremely dangerous and inimical and can lead to negative consequences for the stability and security of the entire region.

Turkey also places strong emphasis on the security, well-being and rights of the Crimean Tatar Turks, who are an integral part of the Crimean population. Since the onset of the crisis, they have responsibly and peacefully voiced their views and concerns, as they always have in the past. We will continue to closely follow their situation.

A political solution to the crisis in Ukraine should be found through diplomatic means on the basis of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, within the framework of universal democratic principles and in accordance with the law and international agreements. We will continue to convey that message in all relevant bilateral and multilateral platforms.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for opening the floor in this timely debate of the General Assembly under the agenda item "Prevention of armed conflict" in relation to the current situation in Ukraine.

As a sponsor of the draft resolution before us (A/68/L.39), Georgia also aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. In my national capacity, I would like to make the follow remarks.

Georgia unequivocally supports the political independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. It does not recognize the referendum conducted in Ukraine's Crimea region on 16 March as legal and legitimate.

What happened in Ukraine reminds us of what we saw in Georgia in 2008, when Russia seized Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. Six years after the war, 20 per cent of my country remains under illegal Russian occupation, with more than 400,000 internally displaced persons and refugees denied the right of return to their homes. Georgia's continuous calls on the Russian Federation to reciprocate a pledge of non-use of force remain unanswered. Moreover, the violation of Georgia's airspace by Russian gunships and drones has become a frequent phenomenon of late.

The latest developments make it apparent that the existing security architecture of the current international system is being undermined and the credibility of United Nations threatened. We support closer international engagement in Ukraine through the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international and regional organizations. We deem it absolutely necessary that the internationally mandated mission have access to the whole territory of Ukraine, as requested by the Ukrainian Government. That is our principled position, again based on our own experience, when, following a Russian veto on the extension of the mandate of a United Nations mission to Georgia, six years after the war, we see a void in which no one is allowed to monitor the violations of human rights in the occupied territories.

Georgia joins the international community's call for no partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine or modification of its borders to take take place through the threat or use

of force or other unlawful means, as stipulated in the draft resolution before us.

Concerted action is needed. Only through such action can we restore the stability of the United Nations system and prevent the annihilation of international law. Georgia once again calls on all Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland): For a small country such as Iceland, respect for international law and relations between States are of crucial importance.

Russia's actions in Crimea have challenged the core principles of the United Nations. The annexation of Crimea is contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulate, inter alia, the non-use of force to settle disputes and respect for the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Member States. Other international agreements have also been violated, such as the 1994 Budapest Memorandum and the 1997 Treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership.

Neither the so-called referendum of 16 March or Russia's annexation of Crimea change the legal status of the region. According to international law, Crimea is part of Ukraine. The referendum, which was held while Russian forces were in complete control of Crimea, was illegal and did not meet the basic standards for democratic elections.

The crisis must be resolved by peaceful means. We urge Russia to cooperate with the Ukrainian Government and the international community in order to find ways out of the crisis.

In this forum, it is natural to focus on international law, the preservation of peace and security and respect for human rights. The message from the international community is clear — violations of international law are unacceptable. It is important to demonstrate a strong international consensus on the crisis in Ukraine. The recent vote in the Security Council on a draft resolution in support of Ukraine, co-sponsored by Iceland, shows that Russia is isolated in this matter (see S/PV.7138).

The Foreign Minister of Iceland visited Ukraine last week. His message was clear — Iceland strongly supports the Ukrainian people and condemns Russia's actions. The use of military force to redraw national boundaries is unacceptable and will have serious consequences for Russia's international standing. Iceland is fully aligned with the European Union with regard to the introduction of restrictive measures in support of Ukraine.

In the current situation, Ukraine deserves our full political and economic support. Iceland calls for strong international support for Ukraine, not only here at the United Nations but also from other international organizations, including the international financial institutions. The situation in Ukraine is of grave concern to all States that value international law and peaceful cooperation. The violation of the sovereignty and territorial borders of Ukraine is not acceptable.

The most effective way to bring stability and security to Ukraine is to provide economic and political support to the Ukrainian people, who took to the streets in November last year, demanding change, political and economic reform and respect for democratic values and human rights. They suffered great losses but kept their hope. We cannot let them down. It is also therefore of the utmost importance that the Ukrainian Government successfully meet the demands of its people in the democratic reform process ahead, while emphasizing the rule of law, good governance and robust anti-corruption measures, and safeguarding the rights of all people, including minorities.

We urge all parties to resolve the crisis by peaceful means through direct political dialogue, respecting the will of the Ukrainian people.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, the General Assembly has been convened as a result of the use of force against sovereign States through measures aimed at overthrowing Governments elected by the votes of their citizens. That total rupture of the constitutional order leads to widespread violence and gives way to coups d'état.

This growing trend to destabilize legitimate, democratically constituted Governments in order to overthrow them, violating the sacred principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, which leads to crisis situations, real human tragedy and untold suffering for their peoples, is reprehensible and extremely worrying. Those who are speaking of democracy are precisely those who are actually subverting it by undemocratic methods in order to advance their own interests. We will not tire of repeating that such a policy of double standards is in truth the real threat to international peace and security.

We have seen in recent years how they have organized, financed and directed from outside internal situations of violence and terrorism in countries that do not yield to their interests, manipulating human rights and civil liberties with disinformation campaigns that start from their own centres of power to force regime change and replace them with regimes that will comply with their policies.

Our President Daniel Ortega Saavedra recently pointed out with clarity:

> "We are witnessing these crises in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and recently in Eastern Europe, and the world remains turbulent. And who is turning the world upside down? Those who want to maintain the oppression of the peoples of our planet, who are trying to establish new forms of colonization, new forms of slavery in the name of democracy, in the name of liberty, stimulating barbarism.
>
> "The same scheme that was used in Honduras to oust President Manuel Zelaya is what we have just seen in Ukraine — just as barbaric, just as brutal, just as bloody! Now in Ukraine there is a president put in place by the intervention. And Ukraine has a minority population that agrees with these brutal events, and another group — the majority — that is against them, which has led autonomous communities to demand their independence."

It is not through policies based on double standards that we strengthen a world of peace. It is not through coups d'état to bring about regime change that we strengthen a world of peace. It is through unity, solidarity and the brotherhood between our peoples, through policies that favour of peace and development, and through diplomatic efforts and solutions that we will achieve the international peace and security. We uphold the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, particularly when it is exercised in a sovereign, peaceful and legitimate manner through the vote.

Because we want peace and believe in the prevention and resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, we reject all unilateral methods, such as political or economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, as they violate international law and do not contribute to easing the tense atmosphere. We support an inclusive political settlement, the result of goodwill on all sides, so that stability and peace may prevail. That is why we will vote against draft resolution A/68/L.39.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, Bolivia exercises its right to take the floor before the General Assembly.

The fact that the Assembly has been convened to deal with an issue that could not be resolved in the Security Council shows once again the ossified and anachronistic ways in which the Organization works. It is no exaggeration to reiterate that Security Council reform and the revitalization of the Assembly cannot be postponed in order to bring about their democratization and to guarantee that they work effectively in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Bolivia is closely following the events that have been taking place. We are extremely concerned to see the possibility of an escalation of violence with unthinkable consequences. We call upon the parties to maintain restraint and resolve the situation through corresponding diplomatic and political channels. We welcome the steps taken to that end by the Secretary-General.

Bolivia is a pacifist country that respects international law and actively contributes to the maintenance of international peace and security. Bolivia will not take a position on the referendum that took place in Crimea nor on the territorial situation of that region.

Respectful of democratic principles and the principle of sovereign equality of States, Bolivia cannot remain silent in the light of the interruption of a constitutional process, in the light of a legitimately elected Government being overthrown. The phrase "regime change" can be heard in many parts of our planet. The same words and some of the same methods have been used for several decades to overthrow democratic Governments on all continents. Democratically elected Governments are stifled in the name of democracy. Wars are begun in the name of peace. Poverty is brought into being in the name of prosperity. That is the logic of the double standard — the double standard that a few insist on imposing on others.

Bolivia is asking whether it is a threat to international security when international law is talked about only when it serves one's interests. Is it not a threat to international security when some violate the sovereignty

of peoples? Is it not a threat to international security when some are trying to rebuild a unipolar world? Is it not a violation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a State when millions of dollars are provided through non-governmental organizations, when the media bombards countries with disinformation and when opponents of democratically elected Governments receive financial support? Is it not a threat to international peace and security when any Power can incessantly build up arms and needlessly use military force in all parts of the globe? Is it not a threat when the major Powers drag other countries into new confrontations as they see fit? Neither threats nor tanks should replace diplomacy.

The series of attacks suffered by our countries in recent years force us to remain vigilant. Bolivia condemns both the logic that seeks to impose isolation and the sanctions that are being implemented outside of international law. Our vote therefore does not represent support for or condemnation of a particular country. Rather, it is an expression of disagreement that matters affecting peoples can be manipulated by major Powers, undermining the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. For that reason, Bolivia will vote against draft resolution A/68/L.39 before us today.

Mr. Pedersen (Norway): Norway fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. In addition, in the light of the fundamental principles of international relations and international law that we are discussing today, I would like to make a national statement on behalf of my country.

Norway supports the draft resolution contained in document A/68/L.39 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The draft resolution reconfirms the importance of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, notably the obligation of all States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and to settle their disputes by peaceful means in full respect of international law. Significantly, the draft resolution also affirms the General Assembly's commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Respect for international law is fundamental in international relations. That is a key priority in Norway's foreign policy. One of the most basic and important rules under international law is the prohibition of the use of force. No State has the right to intervene in the affairs of another State through the use of armed force or coercion. The international community must react when such fundamental principles and rules under international law are violated. We need to be clear on such important issues. Further, as was mentioned by the representatives of Costa Rica and Iceland, that is of particular importance for small countries.

Norway does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea or Sevastopol. There are no independent reports of abuse of Russian-speaking minorities in Crimea or in eastern Ukraine. If such abuse had been the case, several international mechanisms for dealing with such situations within the framework of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) could have been called upon. Those mechanisms were not used in Crimea. Norway welcomes the adoption of the mandate for an OSCE special monitoring mission to Ukraine, and we commend the Conflict Prevention Centre for the swift deployment of personnel.

Over the past few weeks, the international community has tried to engage Russia in a political dialogue with Ukraine. Norway will strongly urge Russia to engage in such a political process in order to find a political solution and negotiated resolution to the conflict.

Mr. Menelaou (Cyprus): Cyprus aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union and the European Council conclusions. We will also vote in favour of draft resolution A/68/L.39.

Developments in Ukraine are a source of major concern. As a country that is enduring a foreign occupation, Cyprus stresses the importance of adhering to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence which must be applied uniformly and for all. We believe that a political solution based on full respect for the principles of and obligations under international law is possible and must be pursued by all parties involved. We encourage restraint and a consensual approach and reiterate the importance of defusing the situation through diplomatic means.

In that regard, we welcome the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General and the deployment to Ukraine of Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson and Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović. We also welcome the deployment of the mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the

continued cooperation of the United Nations with other regional actors, such as the Council of Europe.

Cyprus enjoys close relations with both Ukraine and Russia. We encourage the Ukrainian authorities to reach out to all regions and population groups and to ensure full protection of the rights of people belonging to different ethnicities. The new Government should be representative of all Ukrainian citizens and their aspirations. We also encourage the Ukrainian authorities to investigate all acts of violence. At the same time, we encourage Russia to commit to a diplomatic solution and contribute to the de-escalation of tensions.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on sub-item (b) of agenda item 33. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.39.

I now give the floor to those who have asked to speak in explanation of vote before the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): As a small State with a tiny population, open borders and no standing army, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines owes its continued peaceful existence as an independent and sovereign nation to a robust and universally accepted body of international law, which includes the United Nations Charter. As active members of the General Assembly, we take seriously former Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 1998 assessment that the contributions of small States "are the very glue of progressive international cooperation for the common good". We also agree wholeheartedly with former United States president John F. Kennedy's 1963 assertion that "small nations... can and must help build a world peace".

One of the essential contributions to be made by small States like ours is the tireless advocacy for timeless principles enshrined in international law. With no ideological or geostrategic axes to grind, we consider it our solemn obligation to not only articulate those principles, but to ensure that they are applied consistently and upheld in the international community as universal truths, rather than selective, uneven and unpredictable tools to further hegemonic or great Power ambition. Such a jaundiced view of international law would weaken the integrity and legitimacy of the General Assembly and, ultimately, the existential pillars upon which small and militarily weak States rely.

Accordingly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines views the recent events in Crimea and Ukraine with great concern. We reiterate the call made by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in its 5 March statement for the pacific settlement of disputes and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Secessionist referendums and those on the sovereignty of ethnically or historically distinct inhabitants of a particular geographic area should not be manipulated or selectively accepted by would-be imperial Powers. We note the sad irony that those most supportive of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence now reject such a declaraion by Crimea, while those with the strongest arguments against the decision of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the Kosovar unilateral declaration of independence now cite it approvingly. We also note that those who advised Argentina to take careful note of the views of 99 per cent of the residents in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) are now branding the opinions of 97 per cent of the residents of Crimea as invalid.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also recalls that the principles put forward to justify intervention in Ukraine are eerily similar to those posited 31 years ago in the context of our CARICOM neighbour Grenada. However, the legal defenders and dissenters have switched places this time.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has long advocated and advanced the principle of territorial integrity, even in the case of ongoing civil war and sectarian unrest. Similarly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines firmly defends paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. We also view the principle of self-determination for non-implanted populations, particularly in the context of decolonization, to be sacrosanct.

Unfortunately, the nature of today's draft resolution (A/68/L.39) and the arguments of its chief proponents have called into question the universal and consistent applicability of international law in such and similar instances. Despite our real and continuing concerns over the events that have taken place in Crimea and Ukraine, we view today's draft resolution as motivated more by the principals than by principles. Many of the major Powers on either side of that particular dispute have reversed their long-standing positions on similar

conflicts and are now on record as contradicting themselves, notwithstanding their efforts to find legal and factual distinctions. Also, it is regrettable that the Assembly has failed to consider the historical context of that particular geopolitical dispute and the nature of the recent change of regime in Ukraine.

Such concerns compel Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

Mrs. Carrion (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay will abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/68/L.39, even though we agree with many of the concepts outlined in the draft text. On previous occasions, our country has expressed its views on conflicts or situations that threaten the main principles of international law, such as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Our country's long-standing support for international law and the role of multilateralism has always led us to act consistently in upholding the law and the principle of the territorial integrity of States. The most recent cases were Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence and the referendum of the people of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). In both cases, we rejected the possibility of undermining such principles.

We believe that the territorial integrity of States is a principle of the United Nations and a fundamental standard of basic international law that all States should respect as a fundamental element for the peaceful coexistence and cooperation among members of the international community. In the light of that long-standing position of our country, in the specific case of the Crimean peninsula Uruguay believes that any declaration that is not in line with the constitutional principles of the Ukrainian State cannot alter the internationally recognized borders and therefore contravenes the principle of the territorial integrity of States. International legality must prevail.

However, while consistent in that regard, the draft resolution also contains other elements of a political nature that our country believes to be inappropriate and that significantly alter its scope, which, in our view, should focus solely on applying the principle of the territorial integrity of States.

The promotion of democratic principles is the responsibility of all actors involved in the current events in Ukraine. It is important that all such stakeholders contribute to the country's stability, the democratic legitimacy of its institutions and the peaceful resolution of the various interests present in the Ukrainian society, and prevent the heightening of tension at the national and regional levels.

Finally, Uruguay hopes that the conflict of interests that Ukraine is currently experiencing can be resolved exclusively by peaceful means on the basis of dialogue among the parties and in full respect for international law and democratic values.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador reaffirms its commitment to peace and the strict respect for human rights, international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Likewise, we reiterate our total commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to the primacy of multilateralism.

In analysing the situation under consideration, we recall our history, in particular the invaluable backing and support that we received from the international community in resolving the internal conflict that affected the country in the 1980s. We reaffirm our commitment to peace and respect for human rights, international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter. We also note our overwhelming commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes and, again, to the primacy of multilateral action.

El Salvador acknowledges the difficulties faced by the Ukrainian people. However, we believe that the complex situation faced by Ukraine and its neighbouring areas is not fully reflected in draft resolution A/68/L.39. The draft text does not promote areas of dialogue that would make it possible to reach a solution on the basis of the principles of international law and that primarily seek to de-escalate the conflict and to ensure human rights and the political, economic and social stability of the region.

Similarly, El Salvador believes that the content of the draft resolution will not help to resolve the root causes of the crisis. It does not call for dialogue among the actors and countries involved in the crisis or set an appropriate precedent for dealing with various points of inter- and intra-State tensions in the world on geographical grounds. Our country supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to promote a direct dialogue between the parties. We reiterate the need to implement of United Nations reform to enable the Organization to better respond to the current complex international reality. El Salvador appeals to all parties to continue to

seek peaceful and diplomatic solutions that favour the people's call for and right to their own development.

Given all those points, El Salvador has taken the sovereign decision to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution before us, contained in document A/68/L.39.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.39, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.39, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine". A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Comoros, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Guyana, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zambia

Draft resolution A/68/L.39 was adopted by 100 votes to 11, with 58 abstentions (resolution 68/262).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Rodríguez Pineda (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala voted in favour of resolution 68/262, which was just adopted. We did so because we cannot endorse the territorial dismemberment of any State on the basis of unilateral arguments invoking people's right to self-determination. That violates both the Charter of the United Nations and the international order established over the past 69 years. That is why we also cannot accept the unilateral decision of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which is an integral part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine, to convene

a referendum that would in effect justify its secession from Ukraine. Nor can we accept the subsequent steps aimed at the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation.

On the other hand, we have serious concerns about the situation. Our concerns originated with the street protests against the established Government in Ukraine, which evolved from peaceful protests to situations of violence and a breaking of the established constitutional order, whose legitimacy could be questionable. We hope that those doubts can be overcome through an open and inclusive electoral process, which fully respects the country's ethnic, cultural and regional diversity, opening the way to a plural Government which would seek friendly relations with all its neighbours. It is possible that a federal State could help in achieving those objectives. But it is up to the peoples of Ukraine to decide in a sovereign manner on their future.

We are also concerned about the present international environment, which seems to be the revival of a dividing fault line between East and West, which we believed was part of the past. While we understand that the present international context makes it impossible to return to what we previously called the "Cold War", which caused so much harm to the world and adversely affected my own country, that atmosphere of tension, if not of confrontation, makes us very uncomfortable and is eroding bit by bit the multiple channels of cooperation that have been built up between the Russian Federation and the main members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. We believe that the events in Ukraine that triggered those tensions also hold the potential to make the country a place where the main external actors in the international arena can come together, to the benefit of the entire world.

In light of all this, we urgently call on all parties to address the aforementioned conflict situation, which would require above all a diplomatic solution to the dispute between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Such an outcome must take into account the diversity of the country and at the same time respect its territorial integrity. In that regard, we support the good offices that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon offered, and we trust that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, together with the United Nations, can play a relevant role in reaching the aforementioned objective.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): Nigeria voted in favour of resolution 68/262, which was adopted today, solely on the basis of principle. We were guided by the same consideration when we voted for draft resolution S/2014/189, submitted to the Security Council on 15 March.

We want it to be clearly understood that in voting for those draft resolutions, Nigeria neither supports nor opposes any particular country or group of countries. Rather, Nigeria firmly upholds the sanctity of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, in accordance with the Declaration on Rights and Duties of States of 1949, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and other relevant instruments that protect the sovereignty of States, the inviolability of their borders and territorial integrity, as well as their political independence.

We did not take lightly the decision to vote in favour of the two texts. We weighed the evidence of the case on the scales of justice and the reality of the situation in our own part of the world. We also considered the universality of the application of the principles that we pledged to uphold in our interaction with the rest of the world. Both draft resolutions reaffirm the fundamental principles of international law and the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that States must respect the rule of law at the international level. They must demonstrate due regard for the universal and self-evident truth that all States are equal in the sight of the law, regardless of their size, their wealth, their power or their influence.

Nigeria had hoped that, after the failure of the Security Council to adopt the draft resolution before it, alternative means of addressing the situation in Ukraine would be found, such as resorting to regional dispute resolution arrangements to which the concerned parties belong. It is our firm conviction that peace can be achieved only on the basis of mutual respect. Indeed, respect is the foundation on which the rule of law is anchored. In that regard, we believe that the protection of ethnic minorities, the guarantee of their inviolable rights and respect for their dignity, among others, are the obligation of States. Therefore, no State should deny the rights of entire nationalities or strip them of their identities, including the use of their native languages.

The United Nations and its Member States must view with concern and apprehension and condemn without reservation all infringements of the Charter and provisions of international law wherever they occur and no matter who perpetrates them. Nigeria will continue to abide by the rule of law and respect the

provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Nigeria takes this opportunity to reiterate its call that States should, as much as possible, endeavour to seek peaceful and amicable ways to settle their disputes, regardless of the nature of the disputes. Those principles, which are also enshrined in article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, to which Nigeria solemnly subscribes, stress the need for respect for the internationally recognized borders of States.

Nigeria will continue to oppose the use and the threat of use of force in settling international disputes. We have consistently called for dialogue, mediation, restraint and an end to hostile rhetoric. Nigeria has advocated mediation and the pacific settlement of all disputes, including territorial disputes. Our willing submission to the ruling of the International Court of Justice in our dispute with the Republic of Cameroon should serve as a beacon and an inspiration to all law-abiding nations.

As a long-standing member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Nigeria will not recognize power blocs or spheres of influence aimed at creating some ephemeral balance of power, which only serve to undermine rather than uphold the universal principles of the United Nations and supremacy of international law. Nigeria is resolved to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the situation in Ukraine and will, in that endeavour, be guided and inspired by universally accepted principles, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and other normative principles of international law.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile values the fact that the General Assembly, as the only principal organ of the United Nations with universal membership, has spoken on the situation in Ukraine, because what is at stake are principles contemplated in the Charter of the United Nations and international law that affect the very coexistence of States, such as the obligation to refrain from the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State. Likewise, we support the appeal to all of the parties to resolve the situation peacefully through direct political dialogue, to refrain from unilateral actions and to commit to international mediation.

In the same vein, Chile reiterates its support for the efforts being made by the Secretary-General to prevent an escalation of the situation, to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis, and for the due protection of the human rights of all people, including all minorities. Chile values the work that is being done in that area by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other regional organizations.

Mr. Neo Ek Beng Mark (Singapore): Singapore opposes the annexation of any country or territory, as it contravenes international law. We also object to any unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country under any pretext. Singapore affirms the principles of respect for the territorial integrity of and non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign nation, and respect for sovereignty and the rule of law.

Singapore therefore opposes the annexation of Crimea to Russia. All parties should respect international law and take steps to de-escalate tensions and resolve the crisis peacefully. Accordingly, Singapore voted in favour of resolution 68/262.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 15 March, the Security Council considered a draft resolution at a time of extreme tension in Ukraine, when there was a serious risk of the situation escalating and leading to violence. At that time, Argentina voted in favour of the aforementioned draft resolution, as we understood that it clarified the international standards and the fundamental principles that should guide the international community, without any reference to future acts or the hypothetical consequences of a referendum that had not yet taken place.

In that vein, once again, a text has been proposed based on a statement in line with an interpretation by the international community of domestic Ukrainian laws that is not coherent with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of that country. In that respect, we have noted a lack of coherency in several statements.

The Charter of the United Nations is very clear and leaves no room for interpretations based on the circumstantial interests of each nation. My country regrets the fact that the parties involved in the situation under consideration today have not duly taken into account repeated appeals by the international community to respect the principles to which we have all adhered as Member States to respect the primacy of the principle of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of all States; to abstain from military, economic or political intervention in the internal affairs of other States; and to strictly align

their actions with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Argentina will continue to comply with those principles, and we regret the double standards employed by various members of the international community, who adapt their actions and statements to geopolitical necessities in order to deal with specific situations.

Argentina does not believe in adopting a confrontational stance that is a throwback to previous eras in which the international community was divided into separate and opposed blocs, thus preventing them from building a common future. We intend for our decisions not to fall back into the concept of a world divided by ideological barriers, a world where the principal victims were the peoples of Latin America, Africa and Asia. We believe that those situations cannot be resolved through unilateral acts of any kind, especially by actors with great influence who should, in fact, be relying on constructive diplomacy. We hope that they will assume their responsibilities.

We are convinced that we must all strive to avoid encouraging dissent and escalating tensions to promote confrontation. We believe that the timing in bringing the draft resolution before us for consideration does not contribute to fulfilling the objective of the entire international community to find a peaceful and political solution to the crisis; it is only contributing to making the situation even more complex.

Argentina will continue to promote a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Accordingly, we reject initiatives that seek to isolate one of the parties or impose unilateral economic sanctions that undermine the conditions that could lead to a dialogue that has become very urgent. We reaffirm once again that the international community should concentrate its efforts on persuading the parties to the Ukrainian crisis to start a constructive dialogue that will allow them find a peaceful solution to the current situation, strictly uphold human rights and international humanitarian law, and respect the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious rights of all minorities. At the same time, the efforts of the international community should be strictly framed within international law and the Charter of the United Nations with the aim of bringing domestic peace to that country and creating an atmosphere conducive to international negotiations.

Our position on territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, be it through political, economic or military means, is as clear as it is consistent with our actions. However, in times like these, resolution 68/262 goes in the direction of limiting dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We therefore abstained in the voting. At the same time, we emphatically support the steps taken by the Secretary-General in this and in all conflicts that involve States Members of the United Nations.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have followed the situation in Ukraine very closely and we would like a just solution to the crisis to be found in a consensual manner, in accordance with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. On the basis of our belief in peaceful and consensual solution to the conflict, we encourage all the parties to avoid any escalation of violence, seek compromise and inclusive dialogue, and engage cooperatively and constructively in the search for a solution acceptable to all.

We were bound by the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter when we voted in favour of resolution 68/262. Those principles are internationally accepted. They include, in particular, the principles of the non-use of force, of settling international conflicts peacefully, of respecting the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all States Members of the United Nations, and of maintaining a comprehensive political dialogue. From our examination of the draft resolution, we came to understand that it sought to assert the aforementioned principles of international law. On the basis of those principles, we voted in favour of resolution 68/262.

Mr. Ja Song Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea voted against resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine". In that regard, as a follow-up, I would like to clarify the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As far as the current crisis in Ukraine is concerned, it has been unquestionably caused by the interference of the United States and other Western countries in the internal affairs of Ukraine and their instigation of chaos and disorder. It is the principled position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to formally oppose and reject any attempt to overthrow legitimate Governments and social systems through such forms of conspiracy as interventions, pressure and the colour revolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of

Korea respects the rights of the people of Ukraine and their choices based on respect for the principle of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and other international laws and regulations.

The United States and other Western countries have unlawfully interfered in the internal affairs of Ukraine and instigated chaos and disorder, thereby bringing instability, violence and strife between peoples in Ukraine to extreme levels. That is the main cause of the reunification of Ukraine with Russia.

It is a well-established practice of the United States to intervene in the internal affairs of sovereign States and provoke chaos and bloodshed for the purposes of gaining hegemony over the world. In particular, the United States is ruthlessly imposing sanctions, blockades and isolation upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea while openly threatening it through military exercises. In addition, the United States is advancing its historical human rights conspiracy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by driving it to a dangerous degree and extreme ends. All those acts serve the purposes of the United States and the Western countries in stifling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the simple reason that we are not in complete agreement with them.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea notes that the reunification of Ukraine with Russia has been undertaken in a legitimate manner by means of a referendum based on the voluntary wishes of the people of Ukraine in line with the right to self-determination set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea therefore voted against resolution 68/262. Further, we intend to oppose all efforts aimed at overthrowing legitimate Governments and social systems and at undermining respect for the right and the choice of the people of Ukraine, which is based on the principles of equal rights and self-determination stipulated in the United Nations Charter and other international laws and regulations.

In conclusion, we hope that the current situation in Ukraine will be resolved in a fair manner to bring about peace and stability in accordance with the wishes and interests of the people of Ukraine pursuant to internationally recognized laws and principles, in particular the principles of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are meeting today in order to discuss a very important matter having to do with the global international order. We believe that this is the appropriate way to consider the issue. We believe that the current global order has not been able to absorb the changes the world has seen over the past 25 years following the collapse of a global order marked by bipolarity and the Cold War. As a result, the current crisis in Ukraine is only a sign of the aftermath of a former order that we wish had remained in the past.

We believe, in accordance with the principles of international law, that the best way to resolve crises in the international community is to employ diplomacy and avoid escalation. However, we are also convinced that the world today needs reform and a total revamping of international institutions in order to make them better suited to the current situation and able to take into account elements that the international community should have been taking into consideration over the past two decades.

We observe, in that respect, that in many cases international law is not consistent when it comes to the concerns of States, which may be better addressed at the regional rather than the international level if we are to guarantee peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourly relations among States. It is also true that there is sometimes a contradiction between the will of the people and the legal frameworks that govern them. As a result, those elements must be reconciled.

If we do not deal with those phenomena actively through the establishment of creative mechanisms that are not selective and are able to strike a balance between principles and interests, international and regional crises will follow one upon another, and the international order will not be able to contain them. That is why Egypt abstained in the voting on resolution 68/262, just adopted.

Mr. Nguyen Trac Ba (Viet Nam): Viet Nam is following the situation in Ukraine and Crimea closely and attentively, and it is our wish that the parties concerned exercise restraint and seek political solutions to the current situation in order to resolve issues through peaceful means on the basis of respect for the fundamental principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the legitimate aspirations of people for the early stabilization of the situation, for the sake of peace and stability in the region and the world.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra Velásquez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru's vote in favour of resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", was another statement of our consistent position advocating respect and adherence to the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, Peru believes that the peaceful resolution of disputes and respect for international treaties are essential to guarantee international peace and security.

Peru recognizes the Secretary-General's efforts to promote mediation, and in that respect we appeal for constructive and inclusive dialogue that takes into account the legitimate interests of all the parties involved, with which Peru maintains friendly and cooperative relations. My country believes that, with regard to international law, it is essential to avoid a return to the dynamics of the past, which were fraught with divisions and confrontation and thus undermined our peoples' progress and development.

Mr. Bamrungphong (Thailand): Thailand has carefully considered resolution 68/262 and decided to vote in favour of it because of the overriding importance that Thailand attaches to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Thailand recognizes that the current situation is complex and delicate. It is our fervent hope that all efforts will be made to bring about an immediate de-escalation of tensions and that the door will be kept open for dialogue that would lead to a political solution and the restoration of peace as soon as possible based on the legitimate interests of all parties concerned.

Mr. Lupan (Republic of Moldova): The Republic of Moldova has followed with great concern the unfolding of the situation in Ukraine and remains deeply worried about the developments in that neighbouring and friendly country. In that context, we have already stressed our position in support of the principles of international law applying to all Member States — in this particular case to Ukraine — on their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, including Article 2. We also believe that bilateral and multilateral agreements make up a body of international law that must be observed, including in the case of Ukraine.

While welcoming the commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to respect and protect the rights of all persons in Ukraine, including minorities, we acknowledge that the future of Ukraine can be considered and decided upon only based on the free will and aspirations of all Ukrainians themselves, without any outside influence.

We regret the conduct of the so-called referendum in Crimea. The Government of the Republic of Moldova expressed its position on 16 March and reiterates that the so-called referendum on the status of the Crimean peninsula cannot be legal, due to the fact that it contravenes the Ukrainian Constitution and international law. The conditions in which the so-called referendum took place cannot be considered representative of the free expression of the people's will and does not correspond to relevant international standards and law. The Republic of Moldova stands with the people of Ukraine and will provide all possible support to efforts to overcome the current crisis in a peaceful manner and in conformity with the principles of international law.

We commend the ongoing United Nations efforts with regard to the crisis and look forward to the continued constructive role of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the United Nations system as a whole in that regard. We also welcome the 21 March decision of the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to deploy a special OSCE monitoring mission to Ukraine, taken this time by consensus, which is a good example for the United Nations to follow.

The crisis in Ukraine presents difficulties for the existing system of inter-State relations and the United Nations. The implementation of international principles on sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States, the rule of law, including in the context of multilateral and bilateral relations, respect for human rights and free and fair expression of the popular will are paramount to the well-functioning of this Organization in particular and to the system of international security and international relations as a whole.

As a country that has had an unresolved and protracted separatist conflict on its territory for over 20 years, we look forward to the resolution of conflict through peaceful means and dialogue. That is why my delegation voted in favour of resolution 68/262, in support of respect for the Charter of the United Nations and its principles.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): The crisis in Ukraine is particularly painful and sensitive for

Kazakhstan. For centuries, the Kazakh, Russian and Ukrainian people have lived in friendship and accord. Today, Kazakhstan is home to Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars, Germans, Poles, Koreans and many others living in peace and harmony. Together we raise our children, strengthen unity and friendship and create a prosperous future for our common land, Kazakhstan.

In its statements, Kazakhstan has repeatedly confirmed its adherence to the fundamental principles of international law. We are interested in Ukraine remaining a sovereign, stable and independent State. The economic recovery of Ukraine is the main priority and prerequisite for the full-fledged normalization of the country's situation.

Kazakhstan always follows an independent foreign policy based on a balance of interests. Kazakhstan's position that conflicts should be resolved through negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations, reflects the views and interests of the majority of States of the world. In today's critical circumstances, we have to take into account the faits accomplis and current realities. It is of crucial importance to heed the voice of reason and search all possible ways to achieve a peaceful settlement of the crisis through political and diplomatic means and within the framework of internationally agreed formats.

Kazakhstan calls upon all parties involved to leave emotions, mutual accusations and finger-pointing behind and reject the language of ultimatums and sanctions. We should not allow a further escalation of tensions and avoid making the situation more complicated, which could have unpredictable consequences on both the regional and global scales. We stand ready to promote and support international mediation efforts and facilitate the negotiation process among all parties and their leaders with a view to the earliest resolution of the situation in Ukraine.

In light of the all this, Kazakhstan abstained in the voting.

Mr. Raja Zaib Shah (Malaysia): Respect for the Charter of the United Nations is paramount to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter enshrines the principles of sovereign equality among Member States and the non-interference in the internal affairs of its Members. Malaysia has always upheld those noble principles. We call upon all parties to adhere to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

Malaysia values its close relations with both Russia and Ukraine. In that regard, we urge both countries to engage in dialogue and explore all possible means of finding a peaceful solution. We hope that both sides will adopt a moderate approach and work towards an amicable solution. Malaysia also supports every peaceful effort, including the international diplomatic initiative aimed at resolving the situation in Ukraine.

Malaysia hopes that all efforts will be exhausted before other measures are considered. All parties involved must respect the rule of law, act responsibly and aim towards finding a peaceful settlement. We believe that the exercise of moderation by all concerned parties could contribute towards reaching a sustainable solution. We would not like to see an escalation of the situation and urge all parties to exercise restraint. The interests, welfare and security of the people of Ukraine must be given the top priority, while taking into account the implications on the overall stability and peace in the region.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): Azerbaijan voted in favour of resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Our position is based on the following understanding. The current situation in Ukraine is a matter of serious concern requiring continued international and regional efforts towards a de-escalation of the crisis and finding a peaceful and negotiated solution in accordance with international law and the Constitution of Ukraine.

The Republic of Azerbaijan condemns extremism, radicalism and separatism in all their forms and manifestations and reiterates is unequivocal adherence to the fundamental principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of States, which constitute the basic foundation of international relations and the international legal order. We strongly support the resolution of all conflicts between Member States through political dialogue on the basis of the aforementioned principles.

In situations of armed conflict or political crisis involving inter-State relations, no solution can be reached which is inconsistent with international law, particularly where fundamental norms are concerned, such as the obligation to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. We believe that the strict observance of those norms concerning friendly relations and cooperation among States and the fulfilment in

good faith of the obligations assumed by States are of the greatest importance for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ms. Richards (Jamaica): Jamaica is firmly committed to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, including respect for the territorial integrity of sovereign States, as well as the resolution of disputes through peaceful means. In that connection, we remain concerned about the situation in Ukraine and consider that the complexities of the situation require the international community to act in a determined, but balanced, manner. That is based on our view that the rule of law and the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter have to be respected by all States, whether large or small. That protects the weak from the strong and ensures that the use or threat of use of force is avoided. It is also important that the application by the international community of the principles underpinning the Charter be undertaken in an even-handed manner, thereby avoiding unnecessary tension for partial political gain.

It was after weighing such considerations that Jamaica took the decision to abstain in the voting on resolution 68/262, as in our view it makes some presumptions that could in effect result in more tensions in the region, delaying the search for a peaceful solution. In keeping with the statement of the Caribbean Community on 5 March, Jamaica continues to support the call for the use of international mediation and/or negotiations to address security and human rights concerns in Ukraine, under the auspices of the United Nations. We further reiterate the call made by the Caribbean Community for all parties involved to act with self-restraint and responsibility in order to reduce tensions and avoid destabilization in that region.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela voted against resolution 68/262 on the situation in Ukraine since we believe that the resolution does not give the attention necessary to the delicate political situation that resulted from the interruption of the democratic constitutional fabric in that European State, which led to the establishment of a developmente facto Government.

Venezuela reiterated its commitment to promoting, protecting and upholding international order, international law and its institutions, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Our national position, which is based on constitutional premises, is consistent with the doctrine that has been developed in the Union of South American Nations, in which its members have categorically opposed changes in the democratic constitutional order of the States of the region.

Our country reiterates its rejection of the overthrow of the democratically elected Government of Ukraine by extremist groups, whose activity, which is encouraged by external Powers connected to opposition groups in the de facto Ukrainian Government, led to very unfortunate events and undermined democracy and the rule of law in the country. Given the negative impact on the peace and stability of that region, such a situation cannot be disregarded since it threatens the security of major parts of the Ukrainian population, who believe their human rights, including their right to life, to be at risk.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the increasing trend of democratically elected Governments being overthrown by groups with extremist ideologies inherited from those that in the past were responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War and the systematic extermination of millions of human beings and that now, in Ukraine, with the complicity and indifference of certain States, reappear stirring up violence in order to incite hatred, intolerance, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism, fuelling the risk of a conflict with unpredictable repercussions.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its call for dialogue and negotiations between the parties in order to overcome the political crisis in Ukraine. We are convinced that it is up to the Ukrainian people to resolve their differences peacefully through an inclusive and democratic dialogue with a view to re-establishing the constitutional order that has been undermined. The international community should support direct dialogue between the parties so as to contribute to the validity of the democratic rule of law, taking into account the legitimate interests of all members of Ukraine's various communities and regions.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country has closely followed the serious events in Ukraine since last year, when the demonstrations began in the city of Kyiv, The protests intensified throughout the month of December 2013 and then in January and February of this year and degenerated into street battles provoked by violent agents on both sides, which caused human and material losses and were aggravated by

the irresponsible presence of foreign politicians, who encouraged the protesters to reject the Government of Ukraine. That spiral of violence created the conditions for the establishment of an irregular Government in Ukraine without to date having clarified the procedures used to remove a democratically elected President.

Those very serious events are the precedents for the referendum that took place on 16 March in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in the city of Sevastopol. Such precedents are of crucial importance in considering the agenda item before us because foreign interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine began long before 16 March. Regrettably, that was not mentioned in resolution 68/262.

In that regard, my delegation would like to say the following. First, my country supports the principles of territorial integrity and of the self-determination of peoples. Secondly, for my country a local referendum is not sufficient to justify a change in the territorial integrity of a State. Thirdly, Ecuador condemns any interference in the internal affairs of other States and any form of intervention, whether it be armed incursion, aggression, occupation or an economic or military blockade. Fourthly, we reject foreign interference in the affairs of Ukraine, which have caused the political destabilization of that country since last year. Fifthly, my country, Ecuador, does not recognize Governments established following the collapse of a democratic order. We oppose the propensity of certain Powers to provoke regime change through the use or threat of use of force. Sixthly, my country does not acknowledge the validity of any unilateral sanctions that a State or a group of States seek to impose on another outside the Charter of the United Nations.

For all those reasons, my country abstained in the voting on the resolution.

Mr. Lazarev (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus welcomes all efforts to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ukraine and to de-escalate the situation in the region. Belarus supports first and foremost resort to mechanisms that are less representative than the General Assembly but that may now be more successful in bringing about a peaceful resolution of the situation. We note the important work in Ukraine of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission and the assessment mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): Algeria, along with several other countries, abstained in the voting on the resolution submitted for our consideration today. Despite our abstention, we would like to reiterate our strict adherence to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, specifically those stated in Articles 1 and 2 that refer to territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty, as well as equal rights and self-determination. We consider those principles as the main cornerstones of international relations and the basis of international law.

Algeria takes pride in its close and friendly relationship both with the Russian Federation and with Ukraine, and cannot but join the calls for the continuation and strengthening of the dialogue to avoid escalation so as to solve the differences and to quell unwanted consequences. We are encouraged by all efforts aimed at calming the current tensions, including those of the Secretary-General, whose personal endeavours we support in that regard. Algeria will obviously continue to contribute to that end, both directly or within the regional and political groups to which we belong, in order to ease the tensions.

Ms. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Honduras voted in favour of resolution 68/262 on the basis of its full respect for the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, which inspire the international community and are the foundation of the Charter of the United Nations. Those principles contribute to and should continue to be the basis for a constructive dialogue towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts between the political actors. Honduras trusts that the resolution not only strengthens the principles that gave rise to the United Nations but also is a means for maintaining peace, security and the international order. Finally, we call on the rest of the international community to continue to respect the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Mr. Ferreira (Cabo Verde) (*spoke in French*): Cabo Verde understands that relations among States must be guided and supported by the universally accepted principles of international law. The Republic of Cabo Verde voted in favour of resolution 68/262 because, as a State Member of the United Nations, we believe that the solution to a dispute can be achieved only through respect for principles, including those enshrined in the

Charter of the Organization, that seek to promote and preserve peace in the world.

On behalf of the Government, I would also like to note and underscore that Cabo Verde's vote is first and foremost in favour of world and regional peace, and that it was exercised in the conviction that political dialogue and the pursuit of peaceful and negotiated solutions remain the path to follow in settling disputes such as the one we are currently considering.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Libya voted in favour of resolution 68/262 on the basis of our commitment to defending the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

We in Libya are fully aware of the historical background of the problems on the Crimean peninsula. We are fully aware of the Russian Federation's interest in Ukraine. Nevertheless, we also cannot ignore the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Those principles are entrenched in the Charter of the United Nations and in international law. Furthermore, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, of which Libya is a member, clearly states the need to respect the post-independence boundaries of States. Therefore, any changes in the borders of any State must be undertaken within the constitutional order of that country and in accordance with the relevant national laws.

Libya stresses the importance of dialogue and diplomatic efforts in resolving inter- and intra-State disputes. We believe that all States are duty-bound to not exploit difficult internal conditions in other States in order to interfere in their internal affairs and undermine their territorial integrity and independence. Libya hopes that the parties concerned will exercise self-restraint, not escalate the situation and endeavour to find a peaceful solution that respects the rights of all.

Ukraine and Russia are neighbours. They must be able to co-exist, and they should draw on their historical relations and the interests of their peoples to find a solution that will normalize relations between them as soon as possible. The international community ought to be encouraging them in that direction.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): I thank you, Mr. President, for affording me the opportunity to explain Botswana's position on resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, which the Assembly has just adopted.

Botswana has been following the unfolding events in Ukraine closely and with deep concern. We are profoundly disturbed by the conflict and escalating tension between two sovereign, neighbouring States that share very deep historical ties. We continue to hope for a diplomatic and amicable solution to the crisis based on the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

In that context, Botswana would like to reaffirm its strong faith in the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, specifically in relation to the respect for the sovereign equality, unity and territorial integrity of States. We believe those, among other principles of international law, to be essential for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Botswana therefore does not support the dismemberment of sovereign nations, either through unilateral declarations of independence or through coercion by external forces. As the Assembly may be aware, Botswana has consistently acted in accordance with those principles in the past, as we believe they are paramount to the maintenance of international peace and stability.

Botswana fully recognizes that the political crisis in Ukraine was precipitated by, among others, the unconstitutional removal of a democratically elected President. We therefore believe that it is critical, at this juncture, for sufficient space to be allowed for the diplomatic efforts that are currently under way at the bilateral level between Ukraine and Russia and at the international level to be pursued to their logical conclusion. Our continued hope is that those processes will deliver a positive and amicable outcome that not only serves to end the hostility between Ukraine and Russia, but also facilitates improved relations between those two sovereign States. Botswana feels very strongly that it is essential for the international community to have a balanced and impartial approach to the conflict.

Because of those considerations, Botswana abstained in the voting on the resolution.

Mr. Scappini Ricciardi (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", the delegation of Paraguay would like to make the following explanation of its abstention in the voting.

The Government of Paraguay has followed closely the events that have occurred on the Crimean peninsula.

It is of interest to us because we consider the Russian Federation and Ukraine to be fraternal countries with which we have enjoy cooperation in various areas. People of Russian and Ukrainian origin in our country have assisted us in the development of various areas of our country. That closeness means that we wish all the best for those two countries.

Paraguay reiterates its adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as they are the essential guiding concepts of our foreign policy. The Government of Paraguay therefore believes that the best way to resolve the current situation is through direct and open dialogue leading to a peaceful and political solution of the dispute.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): We would also like to speak in explanation of position on resolution 68/262, which was just adopted by the Assembly.

Armenia has consistently, over the years, taken a principled position on the promotion of democracy, freedom and rights, including and in particular the equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as universal values and principles embraced by the Assembly and based on the Charter of the United Nations.

The key to resolving any crisis is to act within the framework of international law and seek an early solution to the differences through dialogue and cooperation. The current situation in Ukraine is a sensitive matter, and we strongly believe that an enduring solution can only be realized between the parties concerned through dialogue in a peaceful and negotiated manner.

Peaceful dialogue is also a responsible process. We support the view, expressed in this Hall earlier on numerous occasions, that solutions cannot be achieved as a result of statements made or resolutions adopted by the Assembly. On that basis, my delegation voted against the resolution just adopted.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 33.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/68/PV.81

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

81st plenary meeting
Wednesday, 9 April 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/65/716/Add.8)

The President: I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/68/716/Add.8, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/68/716/Add.7, Grenada has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 132, 134, 139, 140 and 146.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Ken Siah of Singapore, to introduce in one intervention the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly.

Mr. Siah (Singapore), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee containing recommendations on issues considered during the first part of the resumed sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The Fifth Committee met from 3 to 28 March and held eight plenary meetings and numerous rounds of informal and informal-informal consultations.

On agenda item 139, "Human resources management", in paragraph 7 of its report, contained in document A/68/690/Add.1, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 140, "Joint Inspection Unit", in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/68/819, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 146, "Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals", in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/68/683/Add.1, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 134, "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015", in paragraph 7 of its report contained in document A/68/689/Add.1, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution on special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On the same agenda item, the Committee also recommends the adoption of one statement of

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programme budget implications. The relevant report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/68/820.

On agenda item 132, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 10 of its report contained in document A/68/691/Add.1, the adoption of two draft resolutions. Draft resolution I, entitled "Procurement", and draft resolution II, entitled "Progress toward an accountability framework in the United Nations Secretariat", were both adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In paragraph 11 of the same report, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft decision on questions deferred for future consideration, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

I thank delegations for their cooperation during negotiations and assure them that the actions taken during the 34th formal meeting of the Fifth Committee are reflected in the reports before them.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance.

Agenda item 132 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/691/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and a draft decision recommended in paragraph 11 of the same report.

The Assembly will now take decisions on draft resolutions I and II and on the draft decision.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution I, entitled "Procurement". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 68/263).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Progress toward an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 68/264).

The President: The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision, entitled "Questions deferred for future consideration". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted (decision 68/549 B).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 132.

Agenda item 134 (*continued*)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/689/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. We will now take a decision on

the draft resolution, entitled "Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/247 B).

The President: I shall now give the floor to representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to express Cambodia's view on the subvention to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), under agenda item 134.

First of all, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his appeal to the international community in September 2013 to assist Cambodia in a timely manner to resolve the financial crisis of the ECCC.

Following the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/532), entitled "Request for a subvention to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia", dated 16 October 2013, a draft resolution was introduced in the Fifth Committee based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The Royal Government of Cambodia is of the view that investigations and trials of senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime and those believed to be most responsible for grave crimes are a key demand of victims of human rights abuses. The prosecution of such criminals can play a key role in restoring justice and bringing dignity to the victims, help strengthen the rule of law and send a strong signal that such crimes will not be tolerated in human society.

The Royal Government of Cambodia notes the efforts of the Group of 77, which has taken into consideration the needs of the national component of the ECCC.

In 2014, the Royal Government of Cambodia provided its customary $1.7 million for the Court's running costs, plus an additional $1.1 million to cover the salaries of ECCC national personnel, including judicial officers, for the first quarter, for an aggregate of $2.8 million, which represents more than 40 per cent of the $6.4 million estimated budget for the national component. In total, since the establishment of the ECCC in 2006, the Royal Government has provided over $20 million, more than $10 million in cash and $10 million in kind.

In the spirit of collaboration, the Royal Government of Cambodia welcomes the Fifth Committee's endorsement of a subvention to the ECCC from United Nations assessed contributions. According to the Joint Statement by the Royal Government of Cambodia and the United Nations High-level Delegation regarding the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, dated 28 January 2014, the United Nations High-level Delegation agreed that Ambassador David Scheffer, the Secretary-General's Special Expert, would devote maximum efforts, working with representatives of the Royal Government of Cambodia, to mobilizing further funds towards the 2014 budget of the national component of the ECCC. The Royal Government encourages all Member States to provide further voluntary contributions to both the national and international components of the ECCC. The Royal Government of Cambodia welcomes the endorsement of the new budget by the group of interested States and strongly appeals to the donor community to provide the financial support that the ECCC needs.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that the Royal Government of Cambodia remains firmly committed to ending impunity for the atrocities that the Cambodian people endured under the Khmer Rouge regime. We reaffirm our continuing commitment to working closely with the United Nations and all stakeholders to ensure that the Extraordinary Chambers of in the Courts of Cambodia successfully fulfil their mandate in a lasting manner and achieve their goals.

Mr. Sánchez Azcuy (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to say how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over our work once again, Mr. President, and to ask you to convey our greetings to the Secretary-General.

The following statement expresses the position of Cuba's delegation on the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 134, "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015" (A/68/689/Add.1). Cuba would like to make a statement on its position regarding resolution 68/247 B, "Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015", particularly section VII, on the Capital master plan.

Cuba deplores the adoption of paragraph 13 of the resolution, whereby the Secretary-General is authorized to use funds from the 2014-2015 Working Capital Fund and the Special Account to cover the $155 million deficit from the capital master plan. As we know, the deficit is the result of an escalation of costs associated with the capital master plan and of inadequate legislative action on the part of Member States, which were not able to resolve this issue at the appropriate time. Although it is true that the paragraph contains a safeguard that this is to be done on an exceptional basis and will not set a precedent, the decision still nonetheless violates paragraph 5 of resolution 68/250, "Working Capital Fund for the biennium 2014-2015", which specifies what the Fund may be used for. The Fund totals only $150 million, which is not enough to cover the deficit.

There is a precise procedure for using the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account, which Member States have confirmed at every budget biennium. In fact, we have just done exactly that in the main session of the Fifth Committee. This is the second time, however, that the procedure has been violated during the Assembly's sixty-eighth session. It endangers the Organization's financial stability and its ability to meet unforeseen expenses. Cuba considers that it is the responsibility of Member States not to allow safeguards to become established practice or to create negative precedents in that regard.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda item 139 (*continued*)

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/690/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Mobility framework". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/265).

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Let me start by expressing my appreciation to the Assembly for the many important decisions to be taken this afternoon following the latest round of discussions about the future of our Organization. Those decisions will contribute to further strengthening the global, effective, efficient and focused United Nations that we have been building together over the past several years.

I especially want to recognize the Assembly's adoption just now of my proposal for a career development and mobility framework for staff (resolution 68/265). I thank all representatives here, and the many other officials who have contributed to this accomplishment. I am grateful for the Assembly's constructive engagement and support, and would like to congratulate Members on the visionary decision they have made. Establishing a managed mobility framework is a historic development for the United Nations. Mobility will allow us to manage our most precious resource — our staff — far more strategically than we do today. As we implement the framework, we can better deliver worldwide on the mandates the Assembly entrusts to the United Nations.

Today's result is part of a broader strategy for building a modern and truly global Secretariat that is more flexible and responsive to the many pressing demands on the international agenda. To achieve that, we have continued to modernize our business practices over the past several years, including through transformational initiatives such as Inspira, Umoja and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. With respect to human resources reform, we have continuously evolved, starting in 2009 with the General Assembly decision on streamlining contracts and harmonizing conditions of service.

Today, with the adoption of a managed mobility framework, the General Assembly has paved the way for the United Nations and its staff to take a significant step towards fulfilling our common vision of a truly global, dynamic and adaptable workforce. With a structured approach to mobility, we can be much more strategic in deploying staff worldwide in order to fulfil our mission globally. The framework will enable staff to enjoy more rewarding careers as well-rounded and multi-skilled individuals. In the process, they will gain the ability to better meet the diverse needs of the Organization. The framework will also enable us to more effectively share the burden of service in the most difficult duty stations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff representatives for their contributions and input

during the process leading to the proposal that has now been approved. It has not always been easy, but over time we worked hard together to devise a feasible plan with tremendous potential for benefiting both the Organization and its staff. I know there may be concerns among some staff about the impact of this new framework; that is only natural. But I am confident that once it has been implemented, all staff will recognize the benefits of mobility for building their careers, broadening their horizons and gaining diverse perspectives that will be a great asset throughout their professional lives.

That is a big part of what the mobility initiative is all about. The process that led to today's success was transparent, open and based on dialogue. We will maintain that constructive approach as we prepare to launch the new framework in 2016. Until then, we will be in a transitional, preparatory period. As we move forward, I will strive to make sure that the concerns and wishes of Member States are fully addressed.

Today, the Assembly will take a number of other important decisions that will strengthen our overall transformational strategy. I will not review each of them but let me highlight a few. I appreciate the key support of the Assembly for my continued efforts to strengthen accountability in the Organization and in particular Member States' encouragement with regard to results-based management and enterprise risk management. I am fully committed to both those initiatives. I also commend the Assembly's decisions to add resources to strengthen the very important human rights treaty system. I thank the Assembly for recognizing the need to fund the budget shortfalls in the capital master plan. I look forward to Member States' decision on a final appropriation during the main part of the sixty-ninth session.

At the same time, I recognize that there is still no agreement on the proposed United Nations Partnerships Facility and that important questions still have to be addressed. We must acknowledge that partnership is happening, is growing and is a fact. That is even truer today than it was when I first called for adequate United Nations capacity to engage in partnerships more than two years ago. The goal of the proposal for the Partnership Facility is to strengthen the United Nation's capacity to bring greater accountability, coherence, efficiency and scale to United Nations partnership activities.

With fewer than 700 days left to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals and with a post-2015 development agenda on the horizon, it is imperative that we match our ambitions with concrete ways to achieve them. Harnessing the strength of the partnerships, including with private sector, civil society and philanthropic organizations, will help the United Nations to deliver on Member States' priorities and mandates. That is why I look forward to continuing our discussions on that proposal and to achieving an agreement that allows the United Nations to harness the strengths of external partners and to take a coherent and accountable approach to partnerships.

From my earliest days in office back in January 2007, I made a pledge to bring greater transparency, accountability, efficiency and mobility to the United Nations. Those goals are shared by Member States and our staff, who serve each day with dedication, many under difficult and dangerous conditions. I thank Members for the progress that we have achieved so far. The decisions that the Assembly has taken are fundamental to the ability of the United Nations to adapt to the changing global landscape. Let us take the successes that we have achieved here as a sign of our power to reach consensus on key issues, and let us tackle the challenges ahead with even greater faith in our collective ability to strengthen the United Nations. I thank Members for their leadership and commitment.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union to make a statement following the adoption.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the European Union. We are very glad to have the Secretary-General with us today as we take a decision on something that is also so important to him.

The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The States members of the European Union have long been staunch supporters of human resources management reform and the principle of managed

mobility. We fully support the aim of making the work of the United Nations more effective and efficient by implementing a modern human resources system and by fostering an organizational culture that enables staff at all levels to contribute to their greatest potential.

The mobility framework should be seen in that overall context. We therefore welcome the agreement on the Secretary-General's refined managed mobility framework. We believe that the new mobility framework has an important contribution to make to improve the ability of the Organization to deliver on its mandates by enhancing the skills and experience of its staff, who are the Organization's greatest asset, as we have so often affirmed. We also welcome the constructive engagement of all partners and the thorough deliberations that we have been able to have on that important issue. Now it is time to implement the framework. We look forward to realizing the opportunities that mobility will bring, to the benefit of the Organization and all the staff.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 139.

Agenda item 140

Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/819)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/266).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 146 (*continued*)

Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/683/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/267).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 146.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Fifth Committee before it.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(g) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/91)

The President: Members will recall that at its 60th plenary meeting, on 5 December 2013, the Assembly took note of the appointments of Denmark, Japan, Mauritania, Qatar, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America as members of the Committee on Conferences for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2014.

Members will also recall that the Assembly took note of the appointments of Jamaica as a member of the Committee on Conferences for a term of office beginning on 10 February 2014 and ending 31 December 2016 and Uruguay as a member of the Committee on Conferences for a term of office beginning on 7 March 2014 and ending on 31 December 2015, at its 74th and 75th plenary meetings on 10 February and 7 March 2014, respectively.

Members will further recall that there remained one vacant seat from the Latin American and Caribbean States for a term beginning on the date of appointment and ending on 31 December 2014.

On the recommendation of the Chair of the Latin American and Caribbean States, I have appointed Paraguay as a member of the Committee on Conferences for a term of office beginning on 9 April 2014 and ending on 31 December 2014.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that appointment?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Draft resolution (A/68/L.37)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/820)

The President: Members will recall that under agenda item 125, the Assembly adopted resolution 68/2 at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013. Members will further recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 125, jointly with agenda items 14 and 118, at its 54th plenary meeting on 20 November 2013.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.37, entitled "Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system".

I now call on the facilitators of draft resolution A/68/L.37.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland): I am making this statement on behalf of the facilitators of the intergovernmental process on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, Iceland and Tunisia.

The Secretary-General has said,

> "The United Nations human rights treaty body system, which combines noble ideals with practical measures to realize them, is one of the greatest achievements in the history of the global struggle for human rights. The treaty bodies stand at the heart of the international human rights protection system." (*A/66/860, p. 7*)

With that in mind, it has been very clear to us from the beginning how important it would be to successfully conclude the process with consensus among all Member States. We believe that by adopting draft resolution A/68/L.37 before us, we will indeed be strengthening and enhancing the system, as the draft resolution carries significant changes and recommendations for improving the treaty body system.

It offers recommendations on how to improve the reporting process through such measures as lists of issues prior to reporting, common core documents, interactive dialogue and concluding observations. It strengthens the visibility and accessibility of the treaty bodies through videoconferencing and webcasting and other measures. It reinforces the importance of the election process and the quality of the experts. It puts in place efficiency measures that reduce the cost per week of meeting time — for some treaty bodies, close to half a million dollars, or an increased cost efficiency of up to 45 per cent. It reinforces the importance of the independence of the treaty bodies and its members. It provides for an evidence-based, realistic and justifiable allocation of meeting time for the treaty bodies and, based on that model, allocates around 20 additional weeks of meeting time, which is close to a 30 per cent increase. Finally, the draft resolution provides for a significantly strengthened capacity-building component.

Those are measurable achievements.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia): Allow me to continue on behalf of the facilitators of the intergovernmental process.

The discussions that took place among Member States and other stakeholders during the process also led to increased knowledge among Member States here in New York of the complex human rights treaty body system, and the dialogue among stakeholders has been a healthy exercise in itself. Allow me in that context to express the heartfelt appreciation of the facilitators for the contributions of Member States to the process. Although the negotiations were not easy, they clearly demonstrated our common goal of strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system.

During the process, the facilitators also benefitted from the expertise and experience of a number of treaty body members and had the opportunity to meet with most of the committees and chairpersons of the treaty bodies on a number of occasions. Those interactions have been invaluable, and we would like to thank our interlocutors for sharing their valuable experience with us. Similarly, the facilitators have had a number of meetings with civil society and national human rights institutions and benefitted from their perspective on how to strengthen the treaty body system. We are grateful for their contribution. We would also like to mention the contribution and support provided to the intergovernmental process by the High Commissioner

for Human Rights and her Office. We are thankful for their tireless efforts in support of the treaty body system.

Last but not least, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Ambassador Desra Percaya, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his efforts and valuable contribution to the present successful outcome.

It is clear that strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty bodies is an ongoing process. It is our hope that through the intergovernmental process the responsibility and accountability of each of the stakeholders has been strengthened through the draft resolution before us (A/68/L.37). But our obligation towards the system does not end there. After the draft resolution's adoption, the focus has to be on its implementation and, at the end of the day, our success will be measured by its impact on the ground.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.37, entitled "Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.37?

Draft resolution A/68/L.37 was adopted (resolution 68/268).

The President: I now call on those representatives who wish to make statements following the adoption of resolution 68/268.

I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I am taking the floor in connection with the adoption of resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system.

Today marks an important and overdue step in strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. We believe that the resolution adopted by the General Assembly just now as a result of a long and thorough process of discussions is of immediate and direct importance to the international human rights protection system. The human rights treaty bodies stand at the heart of the system and are fundamental in the translation of universal human rights norms into practical measures for their realization for all rights holders. Therefore, their sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency are key to all efforts to promote and protect human rights.

It is for that reason that the European Union has engaged actively, including through concrete proposals, in the General Assembly's discussions over the past two and a half years. It has been our consistent position that the outcome of that process must strengthen the capacity of the treaty bodies to address the increased number of ratifications and the reports and individual communications submitted to them in a more timely and effective manner, and place the treaty body system on a sustainable footing. We have also underlined that it must lead to a higher level of compliance by the States parties with their reporting obligations and better implementation of the concluding observations.

We note that the final text before us is a compromise that aims to take into account the different views of all delegations, but is based on a goal shared by all Member States to address the urgent challenges faced by the treaty bodies and on the confirmation of their unique monitoring role, as outlined in the international human rights treaties. It also reflects the shared understanding that only a balanced solution that addresses cost savings, efficiency, additional meeting time on the basis of estimated burden of work and capacity-building can provide a credible step towards a strengthened human rights treaty body system. Moreover, only in that way can it do justice to the extensive multi-stakeholder consultations, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which provided the basis for the Assembly's deliberations.

Let me again underline the potential practical contribution our decision today can make to enhancing the human rights treaty body system. While we welcome the adoption of resolution 68/268, we emphasize the paramount importance of its implementation by all stakeholders. We continued to encourage throughout the discussions all steps by various stakeholders, including the treaty bodies, to strengthen and enhance their methods of work and trust that the resolution adopted today will further facilitate those efforts. We

also take note of the invitation by the General Assembly to the human rights treaty bodies and the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to work to increase coordination and predictability in the reporting process.

In that regard, I would emphasize a crucial position of the European Union, expressed throughout the process and relevant to the implementation of the resolution just adopted — respect for the competences and independence of various stakeholders, including the treaty bodies, as set out in the human rights treaties and reaffirmed by the General Assembly in the resolution. It is with that key consideration in mind that the European Union understands resolution 68/268.

We note the intense and in-depth General Assembly discussions over its past three sessions, which helped identify a consensus solution among all delegations. We thank the co-facilitators — the Permanent Representative of Iceland, Ambassador Gréta Gunnarsdóttir, and the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, Ambassador Mohamed Khiari — the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Desra Percaya, and their teams for their dedication, patience and tireless efforts in reaching that goal. We also thank all delegations for their close cooperation and engagement in that process. We welcome the expertise provided by all stakeholders, including the treaty body experts, and the support of the High Commissioner and her Office in attaining the outcome we have adopted today.

The human rights treaty bodies are a vital part of our joint efforts to promote and protect human rights, as underlined by the increasing and, in some cases, near universal ratification of the international human rights treaties. It is our strong belief that the adoption of resolution 68/268 today will promote steps by all stakeholders — treaty bodies, States parties, the Office of the High Commissioner, national human rights institutions and civil society — towards a stronger, more efficient and effective treaty body system. We will continue to pay close attention to the impact of the resolution as it is implemented in the coming years, with the expectation that what we are adopting today will have a real and positive impact in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Mr. Kyaw Tin (Myanmar): I have the great pleasure to speak on this pertinent issue on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Allow me to express ASEAN's utmost appreciation and warmest congratulations to the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Tunisia, in diligently steering the consultations that have led to the successful conclusion of the intergovernmental process. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, the previous co-facilitator, for his unwavering efforts.

ASEAN actively and constructively participated in the consultations in order to achieve a substantive, meaningful and balanced document that would strengthen the treaty body system. ASEAN appreciates the concrete steps made by the co-facilitators in addressing our concerns and including our proposals in the text. During the negotiation process, ASEAN highlighted five issues that are of key importance to us. Allow me to reiterate ASEAN's positions with regard to the process.

First, on ensuring the quality and efficiency of the system, ASEAN had given its strong support to the proposals in resolution 68/268 towards that end, including a simplified reporting procedure, the submission of a common core document, word limits on the number of questions and on States parties' reports, which was included in paragraph 15. We emphasize that all measures to improve the quality and efficiency of the system must be applied in an objective and non-biased manner for all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations.

Secondly, with respect to ensuring the financial sustainability of the system, ASEAN had supported the proposal for increased meeting time contained in paragraph 26 and hopes that that will address the problem of the persistent backlog. We encourage the treaty body experts to continue to improve effectiveness by considering at least 2.5 reports per week and, where relevant, at least five reports under the optional protocols. We emphasize that the additional margin in paragraph 26 (c) should be allocated among the Committees, on the basis of their expected workload in addressing the backlog. Furthermore, while we are in favour of cost-saving measures, we underscore the importance of and need for summary records for the dialogue of human rights treaty bodies with States parties to be issued, as stated in paragraph 24. We

stress that webcasting shall not in any way replace the issuance of such records.

Thirdly, in regard to increasing the capacity-building capabilities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ASEAN is supportive of the capacity-building proposals contained in paragraphs 17 to 19, which we hope will greatly benefit States parties in assisting them to fulfil their treaty obligations. Such assistance should be undertaken upon request, in consultation with and with the consent of the State concerned and in accordance with the principle of national ownership. Those principles are reflected in the fifteenth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 17 and 19.

ASEAN is of the view that those paragraphs should always be considered together and should serve as guideposts for the terms of reference relating to the work of any potential capacity-building officer in OHCHR regional offices to ensure adherence to that mandate. Capacity-building activities, in the form of trilateral cooperation with regional organizations, will contribute to strengthening regional human rights bodies, such as the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, when the same principles apply.

Fourthly, with regard to enhancing and strengthening the communication and interaction between treaty bodies and States parties, it is important that the resolution recognizes States parties as key stakeholders of the treaty body system and preserves the principle of cooperation and genuine dialogue. In that regard, we are of the view that the existing good practice of sharing the list of questions with States parties a few days before the dialogue between States parties and treaty bodies should continue. We are supportive of the inclusion of paragraph 39 on the annual meetings of the Chairs of the treaty bodies with States parties to all human rights treaties, held in Geneva and New York, with a view to ensuring a forum for an open and formal interactive dialogue. We believe that to be an effective approach to increase interaction and to improve the channels of communication between both parties.

Fifthly, with respect to maintaining the independence, professionalism and accountability of members of the human rights treaty bodies, we strongly believe that the independence, impartiality and credibility of members of the treaty bodies are essential for the discharge of their mandates. ASEAN is therefore pleased to note that the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies adopted the Addis Ababa guidelines in 2012. However, ASEAN remains concerned that some treaty bodies have not implemented those guidelines. We encourage them to do so. We are pleased that paragraph 37 encourages the treaty bodies to seek the views of States parties, the key stakeholders, in reviewing the guidelines, which we believe will serve only to improve them.

Furthermore, ASEAN underscores that it is important that the composition of treaty bodies give due consideration, among other issues, to equitable geographical distribution, balanced gender representation, professional background and representation of different legal systems. It is also important that the members nominated to serve on the treaty bodies serve in their personal capacity, be of high moral character, integrity and acknowledged impartiality and possess competence in the field of human rights.

In the spirit of strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, we look forward to the implementation of the resolution and reaffirm ASEAN's full support and constructive role in that regard. We would be grateful if this statement could be recorded in full in the official records of the session.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Tunisia as co-facilitators, and the Permanent Representative of Indonesia and their teams for their tireless efforts and perseverance, which have allowed us to successfully conclude the process.

From the beginning of the inclusive consultations process on strengthening the human rights treaty body system, launched by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva in 2009, and then continued here at the General Assembly, Switzerland has always actively engaged with other States in order to, first, seek pragmatic solutions to improve the system's effectiveness and successfully to overcome the challenges with regard to current and future capacity; secondly, defend the independence and expertise of members of the treaty bodies, which are at the heart of the United Nations human rights protection system; and thirdly, include the views of all stakeholders concerned. These include States, of course, but also the treaty bodies themselves, the High Commissioner for

Human Rights, national human rights institutions and civil society.

Our assessment of the end of that long process is that the outcome is positive. However, it is useful to recall that resolution 68/268, which we have just adopted, is only the beginning of the new process of its implementation. The resolution is a solid foundation, to which all actors concerned should be fully committed in order to truly contribute to improving the system's effectiveness and efficiency. Two aspects should be underscored in that regard. First, it is the primary responsibility of treaty bodies themselves to establish efficient working methods. Secondly, it is our responsibility as States to show more discipline in order to submit our reports in time and to improve our cooperation with the treaty bodies.

In conclusion, the Assembly can rest assured that Switzerland will continue to actively work for the implementation of the resolution and, in general, for the institutional and financial strengthening of the human rights pillar within the United Nations.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the cross-regional group, which includes Belarus, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Syria, Venezuela and my own country, the Russian Federation.

We decided to join the consensus on resolution 68/268, entitled "Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system". We would like to express our gratitude to the co-facilitators — the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Tunisia — as well as Indonesia for their leadership throughout the entire intergovernmental process.

The functioning of the human rights treaty bodies is one of the cornerstones of the universal international system for the promotion and protection of human rights. Its genuine improvement was one of the principle goals of the cross-regional group throughout the negotiation process, which lasted more than two years. Numerous meetings in the context of the intergovernmental process clearly indicated that the treaty body system was in serious crisis and that the extent of the problems in its functioning was deeper and more complex than it seemed at the outset.

During the intergovernmental process, the cross-regional group was engaged in a constructive dialogue with other States on a broad range of issues related to the functioning of the treaty bodies. Despite the fact that not all our proposals were reflected in the final document, we believe the current resolution to be a basis for further strengthening the treaty body system and improving its functioning.

It is now crucial for all stakeholders, in particular the treaty bodies themselves, to ensure the prompt and full implementation of the resolution. For example, States parties should prepare short and concise national reports. The treaty bodies and their experts, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, must demonstrate true impartiality, objectivity and independence. We also hope that the resolution's various provisions on the consideration of periodic reports and individual communications will not be used for hollow or groundless requests for additional funding and human resources.

At the same time, the United Nations system as a whole should be able to ensure the effective functioning of the treaty body system, bearing in mind the fundamental principles of the United Nations, such as multilingualism. We therefore expect that all requests from States parties regarding the use of the six official languages of the United Nations, as provided for in the resolution, will be met accordingly and in a timely manner.

During the in-depth intergovernmental process, a decision was also reached on the financial aspects of the functioning of the treaty body system. Bearing in mind the resolution's positions, in future we will not support the practice whereby treaty bodies ask for additional funding during Third Committee sessions.

The resolution stipulates that we have to examine the state of the treaty body system within six years in order to review the measures' effectiveness. Until then, we will continue to discuss various issues relating to the system's functioning at meetings and conferences of the relevant States parties and other forums.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Liechtenstein has been a long-standing supporter of a strong and independent treaty body system, and we consider the human rights system one of the main pillars of the United Nations. We have therefore participated actively in the process of strengthening the treaty bodies that has just reached a conclusion with the adoption of a comprehensive reform package. We consider the text to be a very significant achievement that will help to safeguard the system at a time when it has been

threatened with collapse, and will continue to guarantee its effective functioning.

The adoption of resolution 68/268 today is a clear reaffirmation of the importance that States continue to attach to the work of the treaty bodies. I would like to thank and congratulate the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Tunisia, as well as the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for their outstanding leadership in conducting the negotiations. We would also like to thank the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for its invaluable support in arriving at this far-reaching decision.

The reforms we have just adopted will ensure the proper working and functioning of the system at a time of an ever-increasing number of treaty ratifications and States' reports. The reforms achieve a balance between greater efficiency and sustainable funding for the system. In that regard, we welcome the decision to provide additional meeting time, as well as simplified reporting procedures. We trust that the increased capacity available within the Office of the High Commissioner to assist States in meeting their reporting obligations will make a significant contribution to addressing the problem of non-reporting, which has plagued the system for such a long time. We are also pleased that the reforms stipulate that any savings realized as a result of the measures laid down will be allocated to the work of treaty bodies.

This reform could be a very important decision in directing the system towards its core purpose — an opportunity for national debate, a tool for regular policy review and a platform for dialogue with individuals of outstanding expertise and qualifications. Throughout the process, we have underlined the importance of respecting the independence of treaty bodies. We are satisfied that the reform package has largely followed that principle and has refrained from measures that would have unduly interfered with the independence of those expert bodies.

The Addis Ababa guidelines demonstrate the treaty bodies' ability to strengthen their own methods of work and safeguard their independence. We trust that they will continue their efforts in this regard, particularly in order to maximize the efficiency and benefits of the dialogues with States. We will continue to support efforts aimed at improving the election procedures and ensuring that the best-qualified individuals are nominated and elected to serve on treaty bodies.

Finally, we welcome the inclusion of a review clause in the reform package. One lesson we have learned from this process is that we definitely let too much time pass before agreeing on the measures just adopted. We will certainly have to continue monitoring developments in the system and be ready to make adjustments as needed.

Mr. Ruidiaz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak at this meeting on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and my own country, Chile. As the group of like-minded Latin American countries, we participated throughout the entire intergovernmental process of strengthening and improving the efficient functioning of the human rights treaty body system, the final result of which was adopted today by the General Assembly (resolution 68/258).

This has been a long, complex and sometimes difficult process, directly affecting the effective promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. The treaty bodies, and their ability to effectively monitor compliance with the major human rights instruments, were dealing with a critical situation that seriously undermined their capacity to fulfil the functions assigned to them by States and thereby threatened a fundamental component of the multilateral system protecting human rights. We believe that today the General Assembly has produced an effective response to that challenge.

The like-minded Latin American countries welcome the adoption of the resolution's provisions, which, while certainly reflecting the delicate balance achieved between the various policy positions, also form the basis for effective improvement of the treaty bodies' work, thanks to a happy meeting of minds, of savings pursued and resources committed in a constructive consensus whose ultimate goal is to better protect the human rights with whose protection the committees are entrusted.

The formula agreed on also respects the autonomy and independence essential to the committees' work, according to their respective conventions, and ensures their ability to work objectively and impartially, without forgettng that it also includes the necessary mechanisms for updating and evaluating proposed measures in a system that, like everything, can be improved, including a review of the committees' status and the measures' effectiveness six years after this adoption.

We owe the satisfactory result achieved to the many people who have played a leading and nurturing role in the process. In that regard, we would like to express our special appreciation to the co-facilitators, Ambassador Gréta Gunnarsdóttir of Iceland, Ambassador Desra Percaya of Indonesia and Ambassador Mohamed Khaled Khiari of Tunisia, and the experts who assisted them — Messrs. Vardi, Arief, Nona, Diana. Amira and Nur — for their tireless dedication, commitment, intelligence and openness, which in February finally enabled us to come up with the basic elements of an agreement, a goal that to many seemed utopian.

The various players involved over the past three years brought different perspectives and concerns to the table, a reflection of the varied and multiple realities in which they function and which must be familiar to the committees themselves. In that regard, we would also like to express our gratitude for the driving role played by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay, who, even before the formal start of the intergovernmental process, encouraged reflection on how to improve the functioning of the committees established pursuant to the human rights treaties. She was concerned that we address the serious situation the committees found themselves in and made the decision to conduct broad consultations with all the relevant actors whose functions qualified them to participate in the discussion: States, the committees and their experts, civil society, national human rights institutions, academics and non-governmental organizations, whose indispensable contributions enriched the ideas and documents that were examined during the debates of the intergovernmental process.

We would like to briefly summarize the main elements in the resolution that our group championed continuously and that encouraged us to believe that it would contribute effectively to strengthening the committees' functioning in a realistic, comprehensive and sustainable manner. Regarding practical measures for improving efficiency, we would like to highlight the additional working time allowed committees and calculated on a sustainable basis, including the allocation of sufficient financial and human resources for the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and its mission to carry out field visits; the push for simplified reporting procedures; and the submission by States of common core documents and updating them, among other measures.

Concerning measures to improve cooperation between the various actors, we would like to cite the resources allocated to essential capacity-building for States and the role to be played by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its regional offices, and by United Nations country teams and agencies, as well as the increased accessibility measures, to cite only a few. Measures that will help to improve the coordination and predictability of the committees' work include further efforts to harmonize and align the committees' working methods, their dialogue with States and their formulation of concrete, focused observations in their comments and general feedback.

Finally, with regard to the measures to strengthen the transparency and credibility of the system and respect for its independence, such as the future webcasting of public meetings and the use of videoconferencing by delegations as an additional measure to facilitate greater participation — which aim, through national processes, to ensure the high moral and professional qualities of the committees' experts and strong condemnation of any reprisals against those who cooperate with the treaty bodies, and to recognize the usefulness of the Addis Ababa guidelines as measures for self-regulation — they all lead in the direction of the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue that should govern the relationship between States and the committees, both of which have an interest in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The group of like-minded Latin American countries understands that the approval of those decisions is in no way the end of the road. We firmly believe that the document adopted provides tools to help the committees and States to better comply with their obligations. We are aware that much remains to be done to substantially increase the level of compliance with States' legal obligation to submit periodic reports, which must be reviewed on time, and then to help them to implement the recommendations. We also cannot ignore that the obligation to produce multiple reports and their various timelines increasingly represent a challenge for States, not only for small States. As a result, we believe that it would be good to have better coordination of the system in general to ensure greater predictability of the reporting cycles, organizing the process as a whole, as indicated in the resolution, which should also lead to greater efficiency in the use of resources.

In conclusion, we want to reiterate our commitment to the broad dissemination of the contents of the resolution and ask that it be disseminated by all other stakeholders, so that its content may be sufficiently known, understood and internalized in the various sectors of our societies that are involved in the submission of periodic reports to the committees. We firmly believe that this will lead to our fundamental objective, which is an effective improvement on the ground of the enjoyment of human rights by the millions of men, women, girls and boys who are ultimately deserving of the multilateral system to promote and protect their human rights and of our efforts.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 125.

I give the floor to the delegation of Mexico.

Mrs. Colín Ortega (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, the delegation of Mexico would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Chile on behalf of the group of like-minded Latin American countries. I would like to thank the Bureau of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, as well as the Secretariat and coordinators who assisted us during this first resumed session, for their work and commitment. I also appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General was present at this meeting.

The issues discussed at the first resumed session of the Fifth Committee made it possible to make progress on aspects which are particularly important for my delegation. Accountability is one of the central pillars of effective and efficient management, which requires the Secretariat's attention and commitment. The promotion of a culture of accountability, which is based on results-based management and the management of institutional risks, will lead to a solid and transparent Organization.

The conclusion of the capital master plan, which will make it possible to host the next session of the General Assembly in the remodelled building, should provide us with a number of lessons learned, which, as a preventive measure, can be shared with similar initiatives for the purpose avoiding increases in the costs of construction programmes in the United Nations system.

For its part, the approval of a full-time post for the representative of the Secretary-General in the investment area of the Pension Fund will make it possible to strengthen that important area to support those who have worked with dedication to this Organization in their retirement.

My delegation would also like to refer to the initiative on the mobility of the Organization's staff. Resolution 68/265, which was adopted today, indicates the willingness of Member States to support the Secretary-General, but states that the General Assembly needs to have information that can be provided only when the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the Umoja platform are up and running throughout the United Nations system. Mexico wishes to recognize the representatives who made it possible to achieve a balanced agreement on that area, which is so relevant to our Organization.

With the adoption of the revised of managed mobility framework, United Nations officials and staff will have a suitable framework for the Secretary-General to develop a dynamic and flexible work force that is capable of meeting the global challenges of the twenty-first century, and for the staff to be trained and to develop themselves professionally to better contribute to the purposes and principles of our Organization. Mexico understands that the United Nations mobility policy will be aimed at adequately addressing all issues related to the professional lives of its employees.

My delegation sincerely hopes that the matters deferred to the second resumed session and to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly will be presented by the Secretariat with the items requested by Member States during the deliberations of the Fifth Committee during the main session and the first resumed session in order to be able to decisively approve them to facilitate the compliance with the mandates agreed by the principal organs of the United Nations.

Finally, we wish to highlight your leadership, Mr. President, which was essential in moving the agreements in the Committee forward, which will make it possible for our Organization to efficiently and effectively address the challenges we face in today's world.

The President: Before concluding, let me quickly acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Chair of the Fifth Committee and his bureau and the Secretariat, which supported the work of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.

United Nations A/68/PV.82

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

82nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 10 April 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Khiari (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 12

Global road safety crisis

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/368)

Draft resolution (A/68/L.40)

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.40.

Mr. Kiryanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Road safety has been and remains one of the today's most pressing issues. Deaths and injuries in road traffic accidents pose a serious threat to global health and have a very negative impact on social and economic progress and sustainable development.

The inclusion of road safety in the agenda of the General Assembly has contributed to a better understanding by the international community of the magnitude of the problem and, as a result, has led to an acceleration of Government action and greater support from the United Nations and other international organizations at the national, regional and global levels. In that regard, it is necessary to emphasize the crucial role of the first Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Moscow in 2009, which was of paramount importance. The Moscow declaration adopted as an outcome of the Conference called upon Member States to declare 2011-2020 the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

Resolutions 64/255 and 66/260, adopted in 2010 and 2012, respectively, upon the initiative of the Russian Federation, triggered the launch within the framework of the Decade of a large-scale campaign to stabilize and reduce the global fatality rate due to road traffic accidents. Targeted steps by the international community to reduce road traffic injuries have already brought about positive results. Accordingly, over the past few years, we have seen a downward trend in the field in a number of countries. Continued cooperation in this area will not only prevent hundreds of thousand fatalities on the roads but also contribute to global and sustainable social and economic progress.

Ensuring road safety is an important aspect in the effective implementation of international development goals, including those in the field of sustainable transport. We hope that universal access to safe, affordable and environmentally sound transport will be recognized as one of the priorities of the post-2015 global development agenda. Such a goal may imply the development of sustainable transport systems, leading, in particular, to better access to transport services, the stabilization and further reduction of the projected fatality rate due to road traffic accidents worldwide, as well as a massive reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

We also support the Secretary General's endeavours to strengthen United Nations system coordination on sustainable transport. We assume that those efforts will take into account and prioritize road safety.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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For its part, the Russian Federation reaffirms its commitment to joint international efforts to fight mortality and injuries on the roads. Today, my country is undertaking a series of activities within its federal target programme for road safety until 2020, including measures on preventing road users' dangerous behaviour, ensuring road safety for children, raising the level of the technical condition of vehicles, developing traffic management systems for vehicles and pedestrians, and providing assistance for road victims. As a result, the decrease in transport risk has doubled.

The fifth international congress on the theme "Safety on the roads for the safety of life", organized by the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, will be held in Saint Petersburg this fall. We invite delegations from all countries to participate.

It is a great honour for us to present for the General Assembly's consideration the draft resolution entitled "Improving global road safety" (A/68/L.40). The draft resolution is based on relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted in previous years. It reflects the progress achieved by the international community on road safety and aims at strengthening multilateral cooperation in all major aspects to reduce the level of injury caused by traffic accidents, which are now considered to be a serious challenge to public health and socioeconomic development in general. It is very important that the draft resolution emphasizes that a robust response to global challenges in road safety is possible through multilateral cooperation that includes private sector and non-governmental organizations.

The draft resolution highly appreciates the efforts undertaken by United Nations entities, first and foremost the World Health Organization (WHO), but also regional commissions, multilateral development banks and other international organizations. The draft resolution welcomes measures taken by Member States to join the relevant international legal instruments and introduce comprehensive national legislation on road safety, taking into account the main risk factors.

It is of paramount importance that the draft resolution calls upon Member States to tackle the problems of road safety through comprehensive approaches, which implies the introduction of efficient road safety management systems, strengthening interagency cooperation and developing public strategies on road safety in line with the Global Plan of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).

The draft resolution mandates WHO and the United Nations regional commissions to further support efforts in achieving the goals of the Decade, including facilitating the arrangements for the third United Nations Global Road Safety Week with a focus on improving the safety of children in traffic.

WHO is encouraged to continue monitoring progress on the implementation of the Decade for stabilization and reduction of road transport accidents. In that context, the draft resolution notes the importance of parameters and indices for a systematic assessment of progress achieved.

The Secretary-General is invited to continue efforts to promote effective international cooperation on road safety issues, including in the broader context of sustainable transport. In that regard, it encourages further efforts to strengthen coordination of the work of the United Nations system on sustainable transport. States Members of the United Nations and the international community as a whole are encouraged to take road safety into due consideration in the elaboration of the global post-2015 development agenda.

The draft resolution welcomes the Government of Brazil's offer to host the second high-level global conference in 2015 in order to monitor progress on the Decade of Action for Road Safety. We wish our Brazilian colleagues success in organizing that important forum.

The draft resolution was discussed in detail during intergovernmental consultations, with the full participation of all parties concerned. We note with deep satisfaction that the negotiations were held in a constructive atmosphere of openness and transparency, which allowed us to reach consensus.

We express our sincere gratitude to all delegations that participated in the negotiation of the draft resolution. In particular, we would like to thank our colleagues from WHO and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for their significant contribution to our work.

We call upon all delegations to support the draft resolution and invite Member States to become sponsors of it.

Ms. Yeoh (Malaysia): I am honoured to stand before the Assembly representing Malaysia. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Russian Federation for leading the discussions that led to a concrete draft resolution on improving global road safety (A/68/L.40).

We are fast approaching the midway point of the Decade of Action for Road Safety. This is the right time to make a calculated assessment. Undoubtedly, there have been many successes and advances. Many nations shared their practices on efforts to reduce road casualties. The Decade of Action has raised the profile of road safety, motivated more countries to establish strategic plans or lead agencies and encouraged important new initiatives.

Malaysia wishes to reaffirm its continuous commitment to the Decade of Action for Road Safety and efforts to reduce road traffic injuries. We are continuously increasing and intensifying our road safety initiatives and programmes towards that end, resulting in the reduction of the fatality index per 10,000 registered vehicles from 3.55 to 2.9 for the period from 2009 to 2013.

In May 2013, Malaysia celebrated United Nations Global Road Safety Week, during which various pedestrian-themed road safety programmes were organized nationwide. That included the adoption of pedestrian facilities by the road safety department, mural-drawing competitions in schools, the repainting of faded zebra crossings and advocacy programmes.

Malaysia successfully introduced road safety education in all primary schools beginning in 2007 and has included a road safety awareness campaign in its national service training programme in an effort to educate and create awareness among the younger generation on the importance of road safety. Malaysia has also embarked on weekly advocacy programmes that target high-risk road users, particularly motorcyclists, and pedestrians in order to increase the knowledge and awareness of current road users. That effort is complemented by advocacy through various media, namely, television, radio, print and social media.

Realizing the value of community involvement, Malaysia has also launched road safety community-based programmes. With the theme "By the community, for the community", every state in Malaysia will be working with a specific district to provide guidance and support to that community's road safety initiatives.

Through cooperation between the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research and the global new car assessment programme, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations new car assessment programme completed two phases of testing involving 25 popular models in the region's market in 2013.

As road safety is everyone's responsibility, the Government actively cooperates with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the public at large to participate in and contribute to road safety initiatives. Recognizing the significance of public engagement, Malaysia continuously listens to and requests feedback from those groups before formulating new road safety policies.

We must — and can — do much more. Safe mobility should be something we should all expect, irrespective of whether we are rich or poor or from the North or South. We should all have safe access to our streets, just as to clean water or education. That should be true for all, but especially so for our children.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly and specifically states that children should have the right to a clean and safe environment. The Convention has been in force for more than 21 years, which is time enough for a child to be born and reach maturity under its protection.

But in many countries children's rights still do not extend to the journey to and from school or the street outside their homes, where kids play. Through this draft resolution, the Assembly will approve a United Nations Global Road Safety Week for 2015, to focus on the needs and rights of children on our streets and roads. Next year, hundreds of organizations and hundreds of thousands of people will campaign to make roads safer for our children.

We need to prioritize safe speeds on our streets to protect all road users, especially children, to encourage a healthy lifestyle and allow people to walk and cycle in safety and in comfort. We need to do more to support the concept of the safe school and make school communities an empowering hub for local action on safe and sustainable transport. We need to accord this agenda the priority it deserves and embed it in national programmes. In that respect, a road safety target must be included in the new post-2015 sustainable development goals.

In my role as Global Ambassador for the Make Roads Safe campaign, I have met many families who have suffered the loss of a child or a parent in a road crash. When one visits homes and hospitals and see first-hand the impact of those tragedies and the way they engulf people in grief and despair, one cannot step away and not do anything. There has not been a voice for road traffic victims.

That is changing. In support of the Decade of Action, the global Make Roads Safe campaign, under the leadership of Mr. Robertson and coordinated by the United Nations Global Road Safety Collaboration; the excellent work being done across the world by the auto clubs of the Fédération internationale de l'automobile, which is led by its President, Jean Todt; and the relevant United Nations resolutions are giving voices to the demand for action.

In my visits to many countries, along with sadness and loss, I have also seen the many ways in which solutions are being implemented and lives protected: helmet enforcement in Viet Nam; new bicycle lanes in Costa Rica; a new road safety strategy in Cambodia; pilot projects for safer school routes in South Africa; the big reductions in deaths and injuries that are being achieved in Russia; and, in my own country, road design solutions and car crash test programmes, which demonstrate Malaysia's commitment to road safety.

It is wonderful that Brazil is offering to host the next Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, which will allow Brazil to look into ways to ensure safer roads. In the months leading up to the Ministerial Conference, we must be ambitious with our expectations.

Road safety needs a stronger voice at the United Nations. We need new sources of funding to support road safety campaign, and we need new momentum in support of our shared objective for the Decade of Action, beginning with the inclusion of road safety in the post-2015 goals. Let us all recommit to that challenge and work together to make our roads safe.

Lord Robertson (United Kingdom): It is a great honour to represent the United Kingdom in today's meeting, and I would like to thank the United Kingdom Government for giving me this opportunity.

I am the Chairman of the Commission for Global Road Safety. As a former United Kingdom Defence Secretary and Secretary General of NATO, I feel I speak with some authority when I describe the carnage on the world's roads as resembling nothing less than a war.

Since I last spoke in the General Assembly six years ago (see A/62/PV.87), a great deal of progress has been made in uniting the world to combat road safety deaths and injuries. Building on the early leadership of the Sultanate of Oman, the Russian Federation hosted the first Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Moscow. The Decade of Action for Road Safety was proclaimed and a Global Plan for the Decade was agreed. I would like to pay tribute to all of those involved in driving that process forward.

Since the launch of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, in May 2011, many countries have been inspired to redouble their efforts to prevent road traffic injuries. New national strategies have been launched in a number of countries, and Bloomberg Philanthropies estimates that more than 1.5 billion people are now being protected by new traffic safety laws in the countries where it works. With the support of the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society, independent vehicle crash test programmes have been established in Latin America and in south-east Asia to encourage consumers to demand safe cars. And safety assessment is now being used to influence road design in some World Bank supported projects.

Yet I have to say that we have not come as far as some of us had hoped, or indeed expected. In 2010, when the General Assembly established the Decade of Action, more than 100 countries endorsed the objective of stabilizing and then reducing road deaths by 2020. But we have not yet seen the levels of international cooperation or political leadership or resourcing that are necessary if we are going to achieve that. I therefore congratulate Brazil for offering to host the mid-decade review Ministerial Conference. That will be an important opportunity to renew commitment to the Decade of Action; to forge new partnerships between countries, within regions and with corporate and philanthropic donors; and to generate momentum for real advances in the second half of the Decade of Action.

The latest global status report from the World Health Organization shows a stark divide between high-income countries, where road casualty numbers are falling, and the rest of the world. Cooperation between nations that have developed expertise and road safety and those that need assistance should therefore be a priority. The need to find ways to cooperate was a subject raised by President Rousseff of Brazil when the United Kingdom's Prime Minister David Cameron visited the country the year before last, and it is clearly important to many Group of Twenty nations that are experiencing rapid motorization.

Improving road safety can seem an immense task, but by focusing on the main building blocks — which are data management, the way roads are designed and used, vehicle standards and new technologies, seat

belt and helmet enforcement and, above all, speed management — countries can drive down the number of deaths and injuries. That has been the experience of the United Kingdom over many decades. The United Kingdom has been fortunate in being able to develop policies through a sustained focus on road safety, and that has led to us being among the world leaders in road safety with one of the lowest casualty rates.

This year in the United Kingdom we are celebrating 30 years of drink-drive campaign activity, which is estimated to have saved around 2,000 lives. That has shown the positive impact that communications can have when done effectively — for instance, by tackling attitudes towards drinking and driving, social acceptability and denial.

Alongside that, we have taken a pioneering role in developing the European New Car Assessment Programme and have also developed our safety helmet rating system, which helps to inform motorcyclists about how well a helmet will protect them from a head injury. That system is unique to the United Kingdom and was recently awarded a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award.

The United Kingdom continues to take a tough approach to enforcing road safety law. However, for some minor offences we have recently made remedial training courses available, which are aimed at changing driver behaviour.

Internationally, too, the United Kingdom is supporting road safety. The Department for International Development provides £1.5 million to the Global Road Safety Facility, which is housed at the World Bank. As a Board member of the Global Road Safety Facility, the United Kingdom has pushed for the mainstreaming of road safety across the World Bank and for increased engagement with other multilateral development banks. The World Bank's Transport Sector Board recently agreed that no road project shall be approved by the Board without a comprehensive consideration of the road safety context in the borrowing country.

In addition, the Department for International Development works directly to improve road safety in partner countries. For example, in Nepal, where almost half a million people suffered road injuries in 2010, the Department is improving safety conditions on highly vulnerable mountain roads and ensuring their sustainability by working with the Government to strengthen the capacity for implementing road safety measures. Through the African Community Access Programme, the Department for International Development undertakes applied research to improve road safety. In Tanzania, for example, its programmes have assessed the effectiveness of different road safety measures to increase safety for children and adults.

Last week, the World Bank and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation published an important new analysis of the global burden of disease caused by motorized transport. That report calculates — and it is really quite remarkable — that the combined deaths from road injury and motor-vehicle related air polution amount to 1.5 million people per year, which is a greater casualty rate than AIDS or malaria. But unlike those terrible diseases, the global trajectory of vehicle-related deaths is upwards. That data reinforces the Commission for Global Road Safety's view that a focus on road safety can also play a vital role in improving the urban environment and tackling some of the conditions, such as poor air quality and lack of exercise, that are responsible for the rapid increase in noncommunicable diseases.

I am grateful to the General Assembly for taking note in this draft resolution (A/68/L.40) of the Commission for Global Road Safety's latest report, *Safe Roads for All: A Post-2015 Agenda for Health and Development*. It is a report with a simple but compelling argument at its core: road traffic deaths and injuries are a plague on the young people of this planet, human suffering is preventable, and we have a powerful model and economic case for taking action.

By the end of this year, the mid-way point of the Decade of Action, we need to see a renewed political and financial commitment to road safety. As part of the open working group meetings last week, the United Kingdom, represented in a troika made up of Australia and the Netherlands, noted the importance of increasing access to safe, sustainable transport, within the cluster discussion on economic growth, industrialization infrastructure and energy.

As Prime Minister Cameron has said, every six seconds somebody is killed or seriously injured on the world's roads. Addressing that must be an urgent priority for the international community. I pay tribute to Michelle Yeoh as the Global Road Safety Ambassador, who spoke before me in this debate. She has brought her talents and her communication skills to bringing this message to a wider audience. But we must all redouble our efforts to secure urgent action for road safety.

The challenge we face, which we have not yet met, is how to transfer the words and good intentions contained in this draft resolution and previous United Nations resolutions into real and practical cooperation and action on our streets and highways. We must do so to fulfil the promise of the Decade of Action and, in doing so, lay the foundations for safer and more sustainable mobility for all.

Mr. Al-Hajri (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the Secretary-General for his report (A/68/368) on efforts to improve road safety around the world. In it, he reviews the most recent developments in the implementation of recommendations contained in General Assembly resolutions on improving road safety around the world. Moreover, I would like to commend the constructive efforts by the international community in the field of traffic and road safety.

We are proud that our country pioneered launching the global Make Roads Safe Campaign, which we introduced in the General Assembly by promoting the inclusion of an item on road safety in the agenda, in the service of generations to come. The Assembly included such an item in its agenda for the first time at its fifty-seventh session. At the plenary meeting held on 22 May 2003 (see A/57/PV.86), the Assembly adopted a resolution (resolution 57/309) that the Sultanate of Oman introduced based on our firm belief in the importance of achieving road safety at the international level.

The international community is shedding light on such tragic incidents in order to raise awareness of the need to improve road safety. The General Assembly has adopted a number of resolutions on global road safety, and a number of meetings have been held at the ministerial level to raise awareness on the tragedy of traffic casualties and on the need to build safer roads and provide technical safety assistance at the regional and global levels.

As evidenced by the fact that road safety has become an important item on the agenda of the United Nations and those of other international organizations, the international community attaches great importance to cooperation with all the relevant parties to put an end to this harmful phenomenon. According to United Nations statistics, approximately 1.2 million people die each year as a result of traffic accidents, in addition to the millions injured or disabled. That takes a heavy social, economic, financial and human toll on the international community.

The Sultanate of Oman is making great efforts to improve road safety. For example, the Sultanate has issued a decree establishing a national committee on road safety to set out a single, comprehensive strategy to reduce traffic and road accidents and to develop standards that meet international criteria. With regard to awareness-raising efforts, we periodically review traffic statistics and, each year, publish approximately 1 million leaflets that are distributed throughout every governorate in the Sultanate and that target road users, schoolchildren and every sector of society. We have also produced internationally award-winning awareness-raising films. In order to raise awareness about road safety among future generations, we have established a traffic school for children that includes a model of an ideal integrated city. Moreover, the police force of the Sultanate of Oman, in cooperation with the relevant Government authorities, has been planning and following up on the implementation of road safety measures. It periodically updates the road design manual to bring it in line with the specifications of local and international safety standards. In addition, we have established a website for the public traffic authority to provide comprehensive information on road safety and answers to people's questions.

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Russian Federation for introducing the draft resolution entitled "Improving road safety around the world". In order to improve international efforts in this respect, and based on our desire to work together to achieve the common goal of safeguarding human rights and increasing international cooperation on road safety, we call on the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Mamabolo (South Africa): My delegation welcomes this important debate to consider the draft resolution entitled "Improving global road safety" (A/68/L.40). We support its adoption and we trust that the world, in particular developing countries, will continue to witness safety improvements to our roads.

Indeed, the issue of road safety is an imperative improvement in our countries, as millions of our people suffer grave injuries — and many lose their lives — due to road accident injuries in our communities. We concur with the view that road accident injuries are a major

public health and development problem with a broad range of social and economic consequences that put considerable strain on our national systems.

For that reason, it is critically important that, in pursuit of sustainable development, our Governments continue to invest in climate-resilient road infrastructure that is capable of withstanding the unusual weather patterns of our times and of meeting the needs of our growing national populations. It is also critically important that we give expression to the draft resolution by strengthening our policy framework at the national level.

In 1996, South Africa adopted the National Road Traffic Act, which regulates road usage and promotes road safety. The act also empowers traffic officers to stop motorists on the roads, examine their cars, verify the validity of their driving licences and issue fines where necessary. In line with our policies of non-discrimination, I should mention that road traffic laws in South Africa are enforced without discrimination and apply to all road users, based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

In addition, in 1997, our national Department of Transport launched the Arrive Alive road-safety campaign as a short-term initiative aimed at reducing carnage on the roads. The campaign has played a significant role in bringing about positive change in road users' attitudes. Through it, the Government of South Africa has managed to drastically reduce the number of deaths from accidents and has sharpened the readiness and rapid response of our law enforcement agencies and health service, particularly during peak traffic periods on the national calendar. Thanks to its success, Arrive Alive has now become a continuing, year-round campaign that is ramped up during peak holiday periods.

In 2006, in another demonstration of its commitment to road safety, South Africa's Government designated October as Transport Month. Now an annual project, Transport Month is used to assess the country's progress in providing reliable and safe roads and modes of transport to all road users in the country. During the month, the Government assesses transport infrastructure and establishes ways by which the public transport system and roads can be improved. The Department of Transport will soon finalize a long-term national master plan designed to improve the role of transport in fostering social and economic development by rolling out infrastructure and services that respond to the needs of South African road users.

In August 2013, the Department of Transport also launched the Zenani Mandela Road Safety Scholarship Certificate Award and Road Safety Initiative. The scholarship is an initiative of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile Foundation, based in the United Kingdom and working with the United Nations in collaboration with South Africa's Department of Transport and the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory. Its purpose is to offer young South Africans an opportunity to learn with and from talented professionals from around the world, with a shared aim of improving road safety for communities in their home countries.

The Zenani Mandela Scholarship is also designed to inspire young leaders in South Africa to join the global movement advocated by the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), which was introduced with the aim of reducing and stabilizing road deaths by 50 per cent by the year 2020 and beyond. We call for global support for that initiative.

At the global level, South Africa is a State party to a number of international conventions related to transport and road safety. I must add that South Africa is party to the United Nations Decade of Action, which aims at raising awareness and supporting international measures to reduce the effects of poor road safety by focusing on the Decade's five road-safety pillars, alongside with the revitalization of the Arrive Alive safety campaign.

In that connection, South Africa has developed its own strategy for the Decade of Action that aims at improving education and enforcement to address poor road-use behaviour, in line with international best practices.

Let us continue to work together to support the implementation of the objectives of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

Mr. Rodríguez Laguens (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank the President for convening this important debate on road safety around the world.

Argentina is an adherent of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), declared by the United Nations in 2010 and aimed at stabilizing and, ultimately, reducing the figures on road-accident casualties

worldwide by increasing activities at the national, regional and global levels.

In 2008, Argentina's President, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, sent a bill to the national Congress that enjoyed political and multisectoral consensus, based on which a law creating a national road safety agency, and making road safety a State policy, was enacted under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior and Transportation. The law provides for the agency's establishment and for a budget allowing it to function interjurisdictionally within our federal system. Since its inception we have implemented a national road-safety education plan that reaches public and private schools at every level throughout the country; the institution of uniform standards for granting national driving licences; a national speed control plan using technology on all national highways; a plan regulating drinking and driving; a seat-belt and motorcycle helmet plan and a national road safety observatory for providing statistics certified by the International Transport Forum. In the past five years we have achieved concrete results that are reflected in the report of the World Health Organization. We have reduced the rate of traffic casualties per 100,000 inhabitants by 14 per cent, and the rate of traffic casualties per 10,000 vehicles by 50 per cent in the same period, representing 5,900 lives saved, which almost equals the number of traffic victims we have in any given year.

We speak of victims, and we should note that all the policies applied at the national level were developed together with civil society organizations, which are an integral part of our national road safety agency, a fact that is particularly true for the families and friends of victims of road accidents, whom I would like to acknowledge here. They are our guiding light on this path, and they are always with us.

The policies I have mentioned and their results have been recognized at international level, in particular during the recent meeting of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration in support of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action of Road Safety. Argentine Minister of the Interior and Transport Florencio Randazzo received an award in recognition of the relationships he has created and the work he has accomplished with civil society as part of the Global Road Safety Facility, among other honours. Furthermore, we should mention that the work done by Minister Randazzo have been recognized by the International Automobile Federation, the World Bank and other organizations, such as the World Health Organization.

The Argentine Republic supports the draft resolution now under consideration by the General Assembly and has co-sponsored it (A/68/L.40). Some of the key elements of the draft resolution deserve greater emphasis — for example, the need for national Governments to promote concrete action on road safety in the short term and the suggestion that leading organizations be established in each country. Endowing them with appropriate budgets and institutional operations and involving all sectors of society is a vital necessity today.

We cannot wait any longer to show concrete determination in the field. We must begin the work to establish specific goals and effective, comparable indicators, such as number of victims per 100,000 inhabitants, the number of victims per 10,000 vehicles. We must also observe certain indicators, such as helmet use, seat belt use, average speed studies and the prevalence of alcohol and drug use, and create baselines for each country. For that, we count on the support of World Health Organization.

Furthermore, it is very important to promote regional initiatives such as the Ibero-American Road Safety Observatory (OISEVI), which brings together road safety authorities of the countries of Ibero-America, especially Latin America. In addition, we know that, with the support of the United Nations, the measures adopted under that initiative can be implemented in other regions. OISEVI's technical cooperation function was mentioned by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his latest report entitled "Improving global road safety" (A/68/368).

The Observatory has as its central objective the coordination of strategic actions in the framework of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020). In that regard, we believe that driver education, the collecction of statistics, the establishment control plans and dealing with the greatest problem of our region — motorcycles — are priorities that we should focus on in our efforts in the short term.

In Argentina, we have made real progress, but we are aware that there is still a long way to go. As noted by the Global Ambassador for the Make Roads Safe campaign, Michelle Yeoh — and this is the slogan of the Decade, one which our Minister of the Interior

and Transport has adopted — "Together we can save millions of lives."

Mr. Jawha (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of my delegation, at the outset, I would like to extend our thanks to the delegation of the Russian Federation for its successful efforts and leadership during the informal negotiations on the draft resolution on improving global road safety (A/68/L.40). The draft resolution deals with one of the most important issues on the agenda of the United Nations and of the world at large, namely, the safety of people.

My delegation took part in the informal consultations on the draft resolution and, as in past years, became one of its sponsors. We believe that it is an important draft resolution with regard to the launch of to the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), which we welcomed. The draft resolution encourages cooperation among Member States and United Nations agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in efforts aimed at achieving the highest possible degree of road safety. In that regard, we would like to emphasized the importance of taking this important issue into account in all upcoming development programmes of the United Nations. We would also like to stress that a sustainable transport sector and improved road safety require a commitment by developed countries to help developing countries, especially those facing exceptional circumstances, through capacity-building, funding and technology transfer, and without delay.

My Government strongly supports all efforts to ensure road safety around the world. We have acceded to the relevant United Nations conventions on oad transport and road signs. It Government also pays great attention to the issue of safety on highways and its impact on human lives and development. The Government has also established a high-level committee under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and with the participation of a number of Government entities as well as civil society organizations, in order to develop a national strategy for road safety. The council of the public authority for road safety in Syria leads the efforts aimed at maintaining the technical conditions of all roads according to global specifications, and securing traffic safety. It also promotes efforts at data collection on traffic safety and administrative systems and raises awareness about traffic satefy rules in cooperation with the relevant actors and civil society organizations.

Despite all the ongoing efforts by the Syrian Government to improve traffic safety, we have experienced a number of difficulties that impede those efforts, including the ongoing imposition by some countries and regional entities of illegal unilateral coercive economic measures against the people and Government of my country. Unfortunately, those measures target vital sectors, including transport, energy, power, finance and trade, with negative impacts on the efforts of both the public and private sectors in all development spheres, especially the plans for building strong infrastructure, including roads, as well as the improvement of the specifications for roads, taking into account safety standards.

Armed terrorist groups that are being trained, financed and equipped by foreign States are indiscriminately targeting civilian passengers and trade and transit convoys. They also plant mines and roadside bombs that claim the lives of thousands of passengers, including children, and causeda great number of physical disabilities. They have also led to fear and horror among Syrians when they travel on roads, after they had enjoyed safety and security on highways for decades. On top of that, this catastrophic terror has had a significant impact on the Syrian economy hampers the significant role of the road networks, economically and commercially, as the primary means for trade movement inside Syria and across the borders.

Finally, we would like to affirm the importance of genuine political will by all Member States to provide assistance to the Syrian Government to deal with those two major problems, and ensure the success of the government development plans, including those that aim at improving road safety.

Mr. Botto (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report on improving global road safety (A/68/368). The report reminds us of the bleak picture for 2010, when road accidents caused more than 1 million deaths. Resolution 66/260, co-sponsored by Monaco and adopted on 19 April 2012, called on Member States to carry out activities to promote road safety in the five areas of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020). In most accidents, it is the behaviour of the driver that is to blame — excessive speed, failure to control the vehicle, blood alcohol level and failure to comply with the basic rules of the road.

That global finding is well known. It is especially urgent to strengthen the prevention of accidents and the protection of road users, in particular the most vulnerable, such as motorcyclists and pedestrians. In 2011, there were 232 injuries and 2 deaths in the Principality of Monaco alone. Declared a national priority two years ago by Prince Albert II, road safety is clearly being improved. In 2012 and 2013, there were no deaths, and the number of accidents is on a downward trend. However, two thirds of the accidents in 2013 still involved two-wheeled vehicles. The Principality's Government has therefore launched several awareness-raising campaigns for drivers, namely, in the media, on the one hand, and by putting up new road signs, on the other hand. In addition, city planning efforts include such things as speed warning cameras to remind drivers of speed limits on the most dangerous road strips. Furthermore, on the legal front, Monaco's criminal code imposes a fine or a prison sentence on anyone driving a vehicle who is clearly drunk or under the influence of alcohol.

Finally, educating children and young people is a key aspect of Monaco's road safety policy. There are theory and practical awareness-raising classes from primary-school age to raise awareness so that children follow the basic highway and road signalling code. Mandatory lessons for school children aged 12 and optional training for those aged 14 lead to a school certificate in road safety. Furthermore, riding a moped requires a special driver's licence, obtainable from the age of 14 years, which is also valid abroad. Monaco was one of the first countries to require the completion of a test for provisional drivers in that category.

Ms. Power (United States of America): The United States is pleased to co-sponsor and urge the adoption of this comprehensive draft resolution on road safety (A/68/L.40). We sponsored the draft resolution because motor vehicle accidents kill more than 1.2 million people every year and because many of those deaths could be prevented through improvements in road design, traffic management, safety equipment and emergency response.

Most important, however, is driver behaviour. Excessive speed and a failure to obey traffic rules are both killers. The role of alcohol in traffic fatalities is also well documented and should never be understated. In recent years, however, we have faced a new and deadly threat in the form of driving while texting or talking on the phone. Research shows that cell phone users are more than five times more likely than undistracted drivers to be involved in an accident and that texting while driving can delay a driver's reactions as much as a 0.08 blood-alcohol level, which is the same level as for a drunk driver. In the United States, more teenagers are already killed while texting than because they have been drinking. However, the problem is not confined either to teenagers or to highly industrialized countries. It is spreading as fast as technology.

Worldwide, six out of seven people have access to cell phones and more than 1 billion cars are on the road. In crowded conditions, with narrow roads and poor infrastructure, bicyclists and pedestrians are particularly at risk. Too many drivers simply do not understand the danger of taking their eyes, even briefly, off the road. While drinking is episodic, the use of hand-held devices is chronic. No one should die or kill because of a text message.

That is a lesson that we are starting to learn. Earlier this week, the state of Maryland, here in the United States, enacted stricter penalties for drivers who cause an accident while texting or talking on a cell phone. The new law was named after Jake Owen, a five-year-old who never turned six because, three years ago, a distracted driver ploughed into his family's car. In 2010, the Secretary-General prohibited United Nations employees from texting while behind the wheel. President Obama adopted a comparable standard for United States employees. Globally, more than 70 countries have approved laws that restrict drivers using hand-held devices. We must build on that momentum and ensure that such laws are enforced.

A motor vehicle is a source of transportation but is also a potential weapon. Compared to other drivers, a distracted driver is at least four times as likely to be involved in a crash. When a driver is texting, the likelihood of an accident rises by a factor of 20. That is pure recklessness and must be stopped.

Two years ago, 18-year-old Taylor Sauer was heading home after dropping a friend off at college. Texting constantly, she was travelling at 88 miles an hour when she ran her car into a semi-trailer. Immediately prior to her death, she sent the following message to a friend: "I can't discuss this matter now. Driving and Facebooking is not safe. Ha ha."

Traffic safety in all its dimensions is a deadly serious business. There are many lessons to be learned about how to minimize the danger. The challenge for us

all and the imperative embodied in the draft resolution that we consider today are to be sure that those lessons are learned before, and not after, it is too late.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): I thank the Acting President for presiding over these discussions on the very important issue of road safety. We need to raise awareness in the United Nations of the fact that road and transit accidents are a leading cause of death in many very populous countries, including my own. Day after day, thousands of people are killed and maimed in streets and roads around the globe.

We congratulate the Russian Federation on its leadership and successful facilitation of the negotiations on draft resolution A/68/L.40, entitled "Improving global road safety", which is before the General Assembly today. Brazil joins as a sponsor of the draft resolution and is glad to offer its full support for this important agenda item as host country to the next high-level conference on global road safety in 2015. We take up that commitment with honour and responsibility. We know that addressing the issue at the international, national and local levels will help to save lives, improve health and promote development, as mentioned by President Dilma Rousseff during her address at the opening of the general debate of the current session of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.5).

I take this opportunity also to acknowledge the presence of Brazilian congressman Hugo Leal, who presides over the parliamentarian front in defence of road safety and who drafted the national law to impose limits on the consumption of alcohol by vehicle drivers through more rigorous enforcement of, and an increase in, criminal penalties.

The current level of traffic accidents in today's world is unacceptably high and points to alarming scenarios in the near future. Mortality and serious injuries caused by road accidents have become one of the most pressing public health problems facing the international community today, since the fatality rate associated with the road system is considerably higher than the fatality rate associated with other systems of transportation. According to reports by the World Health Organization (WHO), road traffic accidents claim the lives of 1.3 million victims and injure 20 to 50 million people every year. If we do not change the course of events, road traffic fatalities will reach 2.3 million and become the sixth leading cause of death by 2020. Decreasing the mortality rate of road traffic accidents is a global challenge that affects developed and developing countries alike. If there is one goal that could be easily typified as universal, this is it, and it is no coincidence that it was recognized as an area of priority in the document compiled by the co-facilitators of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

In March 2010, the United Nations proclaimed the period 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety and called upon Member States to stabilize, and then reduce, the forecast level of road traffic fatalities by increasing activities at the national, regional and global levels. The initiative has generated greater awareness on the importance of enhancing transport infrastructure, adopting preventive measures, penalties and other road safety norms and providing adequate emergency care for people injured in road traffic accidents — and not only adults, but more significantly, children, who tend to be disproportionately affected, whether directly or indirectly, due to the loss of parents or caregivers.

Despite noticeable signs of progress, day-to-day reality still draws to our attention the fact that more needs to be done. Currently, around 27 per cent of deaths and injuries in traffic accidents involve pedestrians and cyclists. But that number rises to over 75 per cent in developing countries. Pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists constitute a major vulnerable group, and they deserve adequate attention in public policies aimed at preventing traffic accidents.

Human life is invaluable and its loss irreparable. The pain it inflicts on families is unbearable and should lead us to take firm action at all levels. Road traffic injuries place a heavy burden on society. According to the Institute for Applied Economic Research, a Brazilian economic institute, costs arising from traffic accidents on federal, state and municipal roads were estimated at approximately $8 billion in 2005. Previous estimates in 2003 revealed costs of approximately $2 billion. In 2012, traffic-related accidents in Brazil resulted in more 150 million hospital admissions in public institutions, at a cost of $90 million. Admissions involving motorcyclists represented 80,000 cases, amounting to $45 million in health-care costs. A renewed national plan was adopted in 2011, under which emergency relief can now be sent more promptly to disaster-affected sites through a network of mobile units at maximal alert levels.

We believe that improving road safety requires multidisciplinary action and efforts to address major risk factors such as the non-use of safety belts and

child restraints, the non-use of helmets, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, inappropriate and excessive speed and texting and inappropriate use of cell phones while driving, as highlighted in the draft resolution we are considering today. Adopting and enforcing legislation that addresses those most common risk factors has been a priority for Brazilian authorities. The best examples to that effect have been the establishment, since June 2008, of a zero-tolerance policy on blood alcohol concentration levels for vehicle drivers and the mandatory use of anti-lock braking systems and airbags in new vehicles as of January 2014. Yet another example is the mobilization through the National Pact for the Reduction of Accidents, which was established in 2011 by the Ministry of Cities and the Ministry of Health and further strengthened by President Dilma Rousseff in September 2012 through partnerships with civil society.

Brazil is deeply engaged in a number of international initiatives to enhance cooperation on road safety in line with the United Nations Global Road Safety Collaboration, set up by WHO. We are also convinced that the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) provides the ideal framework for international cooperation and much-needed support to the development of national plans, possibly and hopefully within the broader framework of a post-2015 development agenda.

Finally, we thank all members for welcoming the offer made by the Brazilian Government to host the next Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in 2015, most probably at the end of November or beginning of December. The proceedings for the establishment of a preparatory committee will be announced in a timely manner, and we expect to count on the active support of partners and organizations in this endeavour so that next year's Conference can contribute to the overall goal of improving road safety through greater international cooperation.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): Jamaica thanks the Secretary-General for transmitting the report by the World Health Organization (A/68/368) on improving global road safety. We note the very comprehensive account of the range of activities and programmes undertaken around the world in furtherance of the goals and objectives of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

Jamaica is indeed pleased that its own activities and programmes reflect the global trends and is happy to sponsor the draft resolution (A/68/L.40). It is noteworthy that there is broad recognition of the need to pay greater attention to global road safety as a means of promoting national development and indeed global development.

Jamaica concurs that more needs to be done to address road safety holistically, including through better implementation and enforcement of laws and regulations on safe road use, improving vehicle safety standards, increasing road user awareness, addressing the five risk factors and investing in post-crash treatment and services.

Our experience has taught us the critical importance of employing multisectoral collaboration in addressing the epidemic of road traffic injuries and deaths. That has resulted in greater efforts and awareness of the need to strengthen capacity and put in place coordinated policies and programmes that involve all stakeholders, with the aim of improving road safety in the country. In 2013, Jamaica was honoured to be the recipient of the prestigious Prince Michael International Road Safety Award in recognition of its success in reducing the number of fatalities on the country's roads. The National Road Safety Council was recognized as a best practice example of a highly effective lead agency on road safety.

Road traffic injuries are already the number one killer of young people aged 15 to 29 worldwide. Despite recent improvements, we run the risk of reversing gains in reducing fatalities. Having reduced annual fatalities from 434 in 1993 to 260 in 2012, Jamaica achieved its target of below 300 fatalities, which was established in 2008. The target was then revised downwards to below 240, to be achieved over a three-year period ending in 2015. However, in 2013 those figures rose to 308. In addition, for the first quarter of 2014, we have seen a 25 per cent increase in fatalities compared with the first quarter of 2013.

We cannot afford to let this epidemic get any worse. Sustained action and attention are required at the national, regional and global levels to accelerate progress towards achieving the target of reducing the projected level of road fatalities by 50 per cent by 2020 and to prevent fatalities from road crashes from becoming the number one cause of preventable death. Road safety still needs to become more of an international priority. Global funding and support are still inadequate to achieve the objectives of the Decade of Action to save 5 million lives and to prevent 50 million serious injuries by 2020. In that regard, we welcome the

offer of the Government of Brazil to host to the second global high-level conference on road safety in 2015 in order to review progress in implementing the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

The rising toll of road deaths places a heavy burden on developing countries such as Jamaica. Health-care costs and the impact on lost productivity are only the most glaring examples. We should also bear in mind the untold cost and suffering borne by victims and their families, the resulting disabilities and the negative impact on the enjoyment of development rights. Those serve only to reiterate why attention to improving global road safety requires that such a goal be properly reflected in the post-2015 development agenda.

As we look towards the new global development agenda, we must ensure that transportation is both safe and sustainable. As such, Jamaica is supportive of efforts to address that objective with a simple target in the context of the new development goals. We reaffirm the call made by our Prime Minister in endorsing "The Long Short Walk" campaign in September 2013 for combating road traffic injury to be included among the post-2015 sustainable development goals in the context of safe and sustainable transport.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland): Road safety is important for all States alike. Iceland is pleased to have co-sponsored again this year draft resolution A/68/L.40, which is before us. We are now in the fourth year of the Decade of Action for Road Safety. We have set ambitious goals to improve road safety, thereby preventing serious life-altering injuries and the loss of lives, aside from the economic costs involved with regard to traffic accidents.

I am pleased to note that prevention and safety efforts in Iceland have resulted in a significant decrease in road traffic fatalities and injuries. A national road safety plan has been in place since 2005 and the progress is evident. The most effective measures to date include legislative action targeted at young drivers, a special emphasis on enforcing speed limits, road risk mapping and targeted prevention campaigns, including against the use of mobile phones while driving. On the basis of the Decade of Action, further areas for improvement have been identified for possible inclusion in the national plan.

While Iceland has managed to decrease the actual number of fatalities, progress at the international level has been in proportional terms. Fatalities have remained the same even as the number of vehicles has increased by 15 per cent from 2007 to 2010. However, more needs to be done if we are to achieve our target.

We also need to focus on survivors of traffic accidents, who are often left with serious and long-lasting injuries. In particular, my Government is committed to raising awareness of spinal cord injuries, which are given a special mention in the draft resolution before us. Traffic accidents cause almost half of all spinal cord injuries. It is estimated that between 4 and 5 million people around the world now live with spinal cord injuries, most of whom are between the ages of 20 and 40.

The Government of Iceland has supported the Institute of Spinal Cord Injury in Iceland in its work towards alleviating the suffering of those living with a spinal cord injury. The Institute aims to raise awareness and to collect information on innovative treatments for such injuries. That initiative has received support from the Nordic Council, which has agreed to organize a joint project to search for an effective remedy for spinal cord injuries.

We encourage Member States, as a part of their national efforts, to take similar steps to increase knowledge of the serious injuries caused by traffic accidents and to try to find ways to more effectively treat or even cure them. In addition, we stand ready to share our knowledge with all those who are interested through our national Road Safety Directorate and the Institute of Spinal Cord Injury in Iceland.

Finally, we would like to thank Oman for originally placing the issue of road safety on the agenda of the United Nations, and the Russian Federation for continuing to promote our collective efforts to ensure the safety and needs of all road users. We know first-hand that real results can be achieved in saving lives and in alleviating the suffering of those left with serious injuries.

Mr. Roet (Israel): The sacred Talmud tells us that whoever saves a life is considered to have saved an entire world. In the light of that, the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety can save the universe.

I would like to thank the President for having convened this meeting on an important topic that calls for more focused attention on saving lives. I would also like to thank the World Health Organization (WHO) for its ongoing activities and support in the area of global road safety. Israel is proud to support the current draft

resolution (A/68/L.40), as it has all previous resolutions on road safety.

Fatalities as a result of road accidents remain shockingly high worldwide. People are twice as likely to be killed in a road accident as to die of malaria. Worldwide, road accidents are the leading cause of death among people of 15 to 29 years old. Vulnerable road users, namely, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists, account for more than half of all traffic fatalities. That is to say nothing of the tens of millions who suffer serious injuries each year, many resulting in long-term or permanent disabilities. That is nothing short of an epidemic.

It is therefore surprising that such an epidemic has not evoked a public outcry. Most of such deaths and injuries are predictable and preventable. Yet only 28 countries, accounting for just 7 per cent of the world's population, are protected by comprehensive traffic safety laws.

Fortunately, the international community is beginning to take action. The five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety provide clarity and areas of focus for national authorities acting to improve domestic road safety. It is clear that progress is being made. The recent WHO report entitled *Improving Global Road Safety* highlights the growing activities of regional organizations that aim to strengthen road safety among their members. The number and variety of regional programmes, including training workshops, indicate that regional organizations can contribute substantially to the implementation of the five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly mention the secondary benefits of increased road safety. It is clear that, in addition to saving lives, implementing the pillars of the Global Plan would reduce road congestion, increase productivity and lessen transport time for goods and people and reduce pollution, to name but a few positive outcomes. While of course those effects pale in comparison to the importance of saving lives and avoiding catastrophic injuries, they serve to counter the argument that Governments simply cannot afford to implement the necessary measures.

I would like to share a few of the many actions the State of Israel has undertaken to improve road safety within the country. In 2006, four years before the General Assembly proclaimed the current Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), Israel established a national road safety authority with the goal of developing and, most importantly, implementing a national plan. The authority promotes regulations and policies, prepares driver-education programmes and communicates safety-related messages to the public. It has a close working relationship with other branches of Government, including the police, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with road safety. Chief among those is Or Yarok — Hebrew for "green light" — which sponsors research on the wide range of factors that influence road safety and puts the knowledge into practice to save lives, for example, taking its outreach directly into the homes of new drivers to promote safe driving practices. Or Yarok is a prime example of effective cooperation between the Government and NGOs.

Together, Israel's national road safety authority and its partners are working to increase road safety though a holistic approach that includes adopting high technical standards for maintaining sound infrastructure, promoting strong education programmes, maintaining a policy of robust enforcement, and other responses that track the five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade. The ultimate goal of Israel's efforts is, of course, to save lives. Our success is evident in the numbers. Thanks to Government efforts, the number of accident atalities among young drivers fell by 60 per cent between 2006 and 2012. As a result, Israel's traffic safety record now surpasses that of other high-income countries with robust traffic laws and enforcement, and its rate of road traffic deaths is among the lowest in the world. That is, of course, not enough, and we should and will do more.

Member States can and should urgently address this global problem through education, and by establishing and enforcing effective road safety laws. It is important to remember that road traffic injuries and deaths can be reduced and prevented if Governments implement appropriate interventions. Nearly seven years of the Decade of Action remain. We have the ability to make our achievements in this area a model for collective resolve and national action. We have the ability to make a difference. We have the ability and the obligation to save the world, one person at a time.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with resolution 49/2, of 19 October 1994, I now give the floor to the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Boulanger (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): Put in economic and sustainable development terms, road crashes kill 3,300 people — roughly the number carried by 10 aircraft — every day, or 1.3 million people every year. Nearly half of those who die on the world's roads are pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Road crashes also severely injure, often permanently, between 20 million and 50 million people every year. The global financial cost of road traffic injuries is $518 billion every year, equivalent to the loss of an economy the size of Switzerland's every year. It is estimated that approximately 85 per cent of annual road crash deaths occur each year in low- and middle-income countries, costing those countries between 2 and 3 per cent of their gross national product per year, or $65 billion — more than all the development aid they receive. By 2020, unless action is taken, road traffic injuries are predicted to rise overall by about 65 per cent. These economic, social and, more fundamentally, human costs to parents, young people, breadwinners, families and communities in general, are unacceptable, particularly since such tragedies are preventable.

Since 1998, when for the first time the *World Disasters Report* of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) termed road crashes a global humanitarian emergency, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement has demonstrated its commitment to road safety, including through the countless efforts of the Global Road Safety Partnership, working with Governments, the private sector and civil society to implement road safety programmes in the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), now in its third year.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/68/368), which outlines several high-profile events that attest to the recognition of the problem around the world and the solutions that Governments and other stakeholders must implement in order to reduce road traffic crashes and their consequences for public health and development. We also wish to echo the *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013* of the World Health Organization (WHO), which reports that real progress has been made in improving road safety and saving lives. For instance, the annual number of road traffic deaths has not increased for the past three years. New road safety laws have been passed in 35 countries. Eighty-nine countries, representing 66 per cent of the world's population, now have comprehensive drink-driving laws. Ninety countries, representing 77 per cent of the world's population, have a comprehensive helmet law covering all riders, roads and engine types, and apply a helmet standard. Progress has also been made in extending seat-belt laws to include rear-seat passengers.

But considerable work must still be done for the goals and objectives of the Decade of Action to be realized. For instance, the *Global Status Report* stresses that only 59 countries, representing just 39 per cent of the world's population, have implemented an urban speed limit of 50 kilometres per hour or lower and allow local authorities to reduce those limits. It also states that transport policies neglect pedestrians and cyclists. Furthermore, while it is true that the annual number of road traffic deaths has not increased overall in the past three years, in 87 countries the number of deaths in the same period did increase, and while new road safety laws have been passed in 35 countries, only 7 per cent of the world's population is covered by comprehensive legislation. At more than 1.2 million lives lost every year, the global death toll remains too high.

The IFRC supports the urgent recommendation of the Secretary-General and WHO that Governments pass comprehensive legislation that meets best practices standards for all key risk factors in order to address this preventable cause of death, injury and disability. We also wish to encourage Member States to develop enforceable policies and laws that protect bystanders and first responders who provide assistance to the injured. Good Samaritan laws are very important in saving lives, as is support to crash victims by properly trained responders. To that end, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is building partnerships with the automobile and touring clubs of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile. The IFRC Global First Aid Reference Centre aims to play an important role in strengthening that essential and indeed very direct link between first aid and road safety.

To underscore the vital importance of first aid in road safety, the theme of this year's World First Aid Day, an event that was introduced by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 2000, was "First aid and road safety". To date, more than 17 million people have learned first aid through courses, and 46 million people have received first aid and preventive messages. Within the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, there are today more than 36,000 active first aid trainers and 770,000 active volunteers.

The total number of voluntary hours in first aid given globally is at least 40 million per year.

The IFRC strongly believes that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, with its 189 National Societies and approximately 15 million active volunteers, has an important role to play in reaching the goals of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020). Only a few months ago, at our General Conference in Sydney, the Global Road Safety Partnership conducted two workshops highlighting the role National Societies can and do play in the Decade of Action. National Societies such as the Viet Nam Red Cross and the Tunisian Red Crescent work as auxiliaries to their Governments and advocate successfully for improved road safety legislation. They take a hands-on role and work with communities in educating children on road safety and with adults and teenagers on improved post-crash care. The workshops also focused attention on the IFRC pledge to work to improve road safety outcomes in the five pillars of the Decade of Action. Delegates from approximately 100 National Societies attended the workshops, and the takeaway was overwhelmingly positive.

It is certain that the road safety situation holds a high level of recognition within the Movement. There are countless examples of good practice initiatives being implemented and shared all over the globe and there is high level leadership commitment to building the capacity of National Societies to expand and enhance their work in the field through partnerships with the Global Road Safety Partnership.

But beyond the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement approach at the national level, we also recognize the need for global initiatives with global impacts. That is why the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) are looking at ways to collaborate and are identifying opportunities in which the dozens of National Societies and millions of volunteers can work together with the 235 automobile clubs with their 60 million members affiliated with the FIA. That kind of partnership could lead to initiatives with global impact.

Much more needs to be done to meet the goal of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), as evidenced in the *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013: Supporting a Decade of Action*, particularly with regard to protecting vulnerable road users, adopting and enforcing good road safety laws and reducing the number of road traffic injuries and fatalities. As the Secretary-General has said,

> "A more systematic approach needs to be taken to address road safety issues across the five pillars outlined in the Global Plan for the Decade." (*A/68/368, para. 66*).

But the IFRC believes that the humanitarian crisis, with its enormous magnitude and very serious impacts on our economic, community, and family lives, requires international cooperation beyond just the sharing of good practices. The IFRC believes that such global partnerships and collaborations could create the impact needed to make a difference in the second half of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker on this item. The General Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.40, entitled "Improving global road safety".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/68/L.40: Algeria, Andorra, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Norway, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United States of America, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.40?

Draft resolution A/68/L.40 was adopted (resolution 68/269).

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

United Nations A/68/PV.83

General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

83rd plenary meeting
Monday, 14 April 2014, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/68/716/Add.9)

The Acting President: In keeping with established practice, I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/68/716/Add.9, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/68/716/Add.8, Tonga has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by the Secretary-General (A/68/234)

The Acting President: As indicated in his note, the Secretary-General requests, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly of an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic".

Owing to the nature of the item, unless there is an objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees to waive the relevant provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this additional item in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include in the agenda of the current session an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic", under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters"?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Owing to the nature of the item, the Secretary-General also requests that it be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to allocate this item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I should like to inform Members that the item entitled "Financing of the United

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Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic" becomes agenda item 176 on the agenda of the current session.

The Chair of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken by the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.